Daily Report

Soviet Union

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FBIS-SOV-91-239 *12 December 1991*

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Arms Control & Disarmament

Disintegration of Nuclear Power Viewed

LD1112234491 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Commentary by A. Gerasimov; introduced by correspondent Irina Mishina; from the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Text] [Mishina] For many years the downfall of the Soviet Union was an American dream. However, Robert Gates, the new director of the CIA, said on 10 December that this dream is turning into a nightmare. The biggest cause for concern for the Western strategists is the control of the 30,000 units of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

[Gerasimov] The text of the agreement on the creation of the commonwealth of independent Slav republics claims that the member-states of the commonwealth will preserve and maintain a common military-strategic space under a unified command including unified control over nuclear weapons. It does not clarify specifically by whom and how the nuclear button can be pressed.

This is the first time in human history that the disintegration of a nuclear power has occurred, and quite understandably the world's inhabitants are concerned over the question of guarantees of their strategic safety. Until 8 December the whole world was aware that only Mikhail Gorbachev could order the launching of the ICBMs located in Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and the Ukraine.

Then on 9 Decembere at a news conference on the results of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha meeting, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk stated that another system had been created for the launching of missiles and that three buttons, each under the control of the leaders of the Slav republics, needed to be pressed simultaneously. There was no mention of the fourth Kazakh button.

It is for military strategists and politicians to judge whether the security of the peoples of the former Soviet Union is increasing and whether world nuclear confrontation is decreasing, but those who have to eliminate the missiles are becoming dismayed. Refuting what the Ukrainian president had said, Gen. [General] Maksimov, the guardian of the missile potential, stated that both prior to and following Belovezhskaya Pushcha only the USSR president is in charge of the nuclear console. This was confirmed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin in a telephone conversation with U.S. President George Bush.

Let us add that alongside the button with Gorbachev are the Defense Council and Defense Ministry of the Soviet Union, a state that to all intents and purposes no longer exists. In short it is a fine muddle in the best traditions of the USSR.

The out-of-favor Chief of the General Staff Lobov, who was recently sacked by the country's president, has brought further refinement to the situation. Today he expressed perplexity over his retirement and at the same time stressed that his credo was the impossibility of the constantly changing political situation having an influence on the Armed Forces.

At present events are developing in such an unexpected way that it is virtually impossible to predict the future, and certainly it is essential to have precise guarantees from all leaders involved with nuclear weapons so that we do not feel like hostages of the button.

[Mishina] And so, up to the present moment Mikhail Gorbachev is the commander-in-chief of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. For the time being the politicians are waiting and assessing the situation. Meanwhile it has been learned that the United States, the EC and NATO have sent their representatives to the Ukraine to clarify the nuclear weapons situation on the spot.

Worldwide Issues

Petrovskiy Receives Iranian, U.S. Diplomats

LD1012055491 Moscow TASS in English 2005 GMT 9 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 9 TASS—Iranian Ambassador to the Soviet Union Nematollah Izadi met on Monday [9 December] with Vladimir Petrovskiy, first deputy Soviet foreign minister, Information Directorate of the Soviet Ministry of External Relations said on Monday.

The two parties discussed Soviet-Iranian relations in light of Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati's recent visit to Moscow.

Izadi and Petrovskiy focused on the political settlement in Afghanistan. Petrovskiy expressed confidence that Iran will facilitate the release of Soviet prisoners of war being held by the Afghan opposition.

Izadi delivered a message from Velayati to his Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze.

On Monday, Petrovskiy also received James Collins, U.S. charge d'affaires ad interim in the Soviet Union. Collins gave him a message for Shevardnadze from U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. They also discussed the U.N. General Assembly's activities, the negotiation process at the Middle East peace conference and other international issues.

Republics' Intent To Join Islamic Body Hailed

LD0912173291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1521 GMT 9 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 9 December (TASS)—The USSR Ministry of External Relations has greeted the intention of a

number of the union republics to join the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO], whose regular summit is now being held in Dakar.

A statement by a representative of the USSR Ministry of External Relations, which was circulated here today, says that the ministry sees such an intention of a number of Central Asian republics of the Union and Azerbaijan as a continuation and development of the processes of acquiring sovereignty.

The ICO is an influential and prestigious association of states which are in favor of strengthening peace and disarmament, of peaceful settlement of crisis situations, and of the development of mutually beneficial cooperation, the statement points out. The organization itself, its new participants, and the entire cause of global improvement will benefit from new sovereign states joining the activities of the organization.

Soviet Mission Alters Stand on UN Resolutions

LD1012153891 Moscow TASS in English 1016 GMT 10 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Yevgeniy Menkes]

[Text] United Nations December 10 TASS—The Soviet Union has altered its stance on the majority of U.N. resolutions on various aspects of the Palestinian problem, demonstrated by a vote on these documents held at the plenary meeting of the 46th General Assembly session on Monday [9 December].

Two large packages of resolutions, which are traditionally adopted by the world community over many years, were presented to the delegates. The documents, prepared after relying on reports by the special political committee, scathingly criticise Israel's policy and practice on the occupied territories and denounced Israel's refusal to fulfil numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on issues pertaining to the occupied territories.

As in previous years, the majority of these resolutions was adopted by the overwhelming majority of votes. Previously, the Soviet Union's voice was always in favour. For instance, in December 1990 the USSR voted in favour of all 16 resolutions put to the vote.

This time, "however, the USSR has cast the affirmative vote only five times and abstained in another 11 cases. Frequently, Soviet diplomats found themselves almost isolated with support from just two or three delegations. They appeared to be Cote d'Ivoire, Dominica and sometimes the United States. The Soviet delegation did not speak about its motives of the vote at the General Assembly plenary session and did not explain why it has swerved from its former positions.

United States & Canada

Baker Interest in 'Minsk Process' Expected

OW1212060191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2100 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] U.S. State Secretary James Baker is coming to Moscow on Sunday December 15. He will have meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, Eduard Shevardnadze, and Andrey Kozyrev, and, apart from Moscow, will visit Kiev, Minsk, Bishkek, and Alma-Ata. Our correspondent was informed in the USSR Foreign Ministry that the decision to visit Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan had been taken after Russia, the Ukraine, and Belarus announced the formation of the Community of Independent States.

The Soviet diplomats who are preparing Mr. Baker's visit believe that the State Secretary will above all be interested in the "Minsk process" and in what the Asian republics think of it. Control of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union will apparently be another principal issue to be brought up.

In view of the present-day critical situation in the country, economic cooperation is bound to be discussed as well.

The main attention in the discussions on regional conflicts may be paid to the Middle East, since a conference is going to be held in Moscow at the end of January to make arrangements for multilateral negotiations on a settlement in the region. Other issues to be dealt with may include the sending of UN troops to Yugoslavia, the introduction of economic sanctions against some of the Yugoslav republics, and the situation on the Korean Peninsula and in Cuba.

There is another issue which, the Soviet diplomats think, will inevitably be brought up—the future of the USSR Foreign Ministry.

U.S. Reaction to Minsk Agreement Viewed

PM1112181191 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 11 Dec 91 Union Edition p 3

[Article by Andrey Ostalskiy: "Bush Changes Attitude Toward Gorbachev"]

[Text] For the first time in many years the U.S. Administration has differed radically with President Gorbachev in assessing the importance of events taking place in our country.

While Gorbachev saw in the Minsk statement a step that is dangerous and unlawful and could intensify chaos and anarchy in society, the United States assessed the event positively. The statement of the leaders of the three republics adopted in Belovezhskaya Forest accords with "the positions and commitments which we consider

important and crucial... We are encouraged by its content," reporters were told by Margaret Tutwiler, a spokeswoman for the State Department.

It is striking that for all its caution, for all George Bush's well known personal sympathy for Mikhail Gorbachev, the U.S. Administration is no longer stopping before openly saying things which are unpleasant for the Soviet leader. Only very recently—at the summit in Madrid—the U.S. President resolutely swept aside suggestions that something had changed in his relations with Gorbachev since the August putsch and emphatically called him his "friend." But politics brook no sentimentality and, observers believe, Washington's reactions to the subsequent development of events obviously attest to resolute changes in the administration's attitude toward the various forces in the former USSR, including the president of that state.

"Observing how power is slipping from President Mikhail Gorbachev's hands, Bush has evidently lost hope that Gorbachev will be able to preserve the unity of the Soviet Union," REUTER observer Alan Elsner writes. And the same agency's Washington correspondent concludes that "for far longer than was sensible in the opinion of many analysts the Bush administration has remained loyal to the Soviet president and his idea that central power in Moscow can remain the basis for a stable post-Soviet confederation."

It is entirely likely that George Bush is personally pained by the weakening of central power. Washington was entirely suited by the status quo and the established channels of collaboration with Gorbachev, whose course toward market and political reforms became even clear after the suppression fo the August putsch. But here is the paradox: It was precisely at the moment when the leaders' mutual trust and their mutual understanding and sympathies had reached their apogee that Gorbachev began drastically to lose the influence essential for his role.

Representatives of the administration persistently emphasize that the United States in no circumstances intends to interfere in our internal affairs, that we ourselves should decide the question of forms of state structure on the territory of the former USSR. But whether Washington wants it or not it still has powerful levers for influencing the development of the situation in our country.

In addition to moral factors (also of some importance), enormous significance attaches to economic aid. Will the United States provide it and if it does then to whom: to the increasingly ill-defined center, to the leaders of the republics (all the republics?), or to the Commonwealth proclaimed in Minsk? Or to someone else? The administration itself is still a very long way from clearly formulating the answers to these questions but it will have to resolve them one way or another—and soon.

The events in our country are developing so rapidly that Bush and his apparatus are scarcely managing to elaborate their stance with regard to one crisis before another arises. Much can change on the basis of the decision taken in this case by Bush. "If George Bush continues to collaborate with Gorbachev, it will be more likely that they (the leaders of the republics of the former USSR) will do the same," Harley Balzer, director of Georgetown University Russian Studies Center, believes.

Perhaps the most important statement with regard to what is happening was made by the U.S. President's press secretary Marlin Fitzwater, who said in connection with the Minsk statement that Washington "is prepared to work with any government or any form of confederation" which takes shape on the territory of the former Soviet Union. And of course, it is far from accidental that this was immediately followed by a reminder that in determining its attitude toward what is happening Washington proceeds from fundamental principles like the need to form a democratic state, recognition of UN documents, guarantees of all citizens' rights and freedoms, respect for existing borders, and the fulfillment of international commitments.

This persistently reiterated position means that the United States will categorically refuse to support someone who for the sake of attaining even the greatest and brightest goals rejects democratic values or disavows international commitments and norms of civilized conduct. That warning applies to the leaders of the new sovereign states but also to Gorbachev, who states that he "will never retreat" on the question of the conservation of the Union's unity. If that must be understood as meaning that the USSR president intends to seek this "at any price," then the U.S. Administration is making it clear that from its point of view the cost of attaining any political goals should have a clearly expressed limit.

Communique Released on U.S.-Soviet Talks

LD1212065191 Moscow TASS in English 1726 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 11 TASS—The Soviet Foreign Ministry's Information Directorate has released a communique summarizing the results of recent Soviet-American consultations on bilateral relations.

Follows the text of the communique:

"In accordance with a previous mutual agreement, Soviet-American consultations on major problems of bilateral relations were held in Moscow on December 9-10.

"The Soviet Union was represented by Deputy Minister of External Relations Aleksandr Obukhov (delegation leader), the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan Guseynaga Sadykhov, Uzbekistan Shakhlo Makhmudova and Tajikistan Lakim Kayumov, senior officials of the foreign ministries of Russia, Kazakhstan, Moldova,

Armenia, Turkmenia and Ukraine, and experts of the USSR Ministry for External Relations.

"The U.S. delegation was led by the U.S. Embassy counsellor-envoy John Hewlings and included deputy head of the USSR sector of the U.S. State Department Mr. Hess and deputy head of the sector of foreign offices of the U.S. State Department Mr. Porter.

"The consultations centered around problems of bilateral relations such as greater openness of Soviet and American society, the expansion of official presence on each other's territory, living and working conditions of diplomats and other citizens of the USSR and the United States, as well as prospects for preserving and expanding the treaty-and-legal infrastructure of Soviet-American interaction.

"At plenary meetings and in working groups, which met in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and partnership characteristic of all Soviet-American relations at the present stage, representatives of republics outlined their approaches and visions of problems under discussion, taking into account positions outlined by the U.S. State Department. Mutually acceptable solutions for a number of problems were reached on the basis of coordinated positions.

"It was agreed that the next round of consultations on bilateral relations would take place in the early 1992. Corresponding work will continue along diplomatic channels".

'Special Team' Seeks Missing Embassy Engineer

92UF0306B Moscow TRUD in Russian 3 Dec 91 p 3

[Article by TASS correspondent Yuriy Kirilchenko: "A Newlywed or a Spy?"]

[Text] New York, 2 December—High-ranking officials in the U.S. Administration are seriously distraught over the sudden disappearance of engineer Warren Clayton, formerly an employee of the American Embassy in Moscow. The main reason for the concern is not this man's personal fate but the fact that he had access to "secret plans of the old embassy," reports the weekly magazine NEWSWEEK, which learned of this story through its own sources.

According to the report Clayton, who supervised the repairs on the 10-storey embassy building after the spring fire, was dismissed from his job and ordered to leave the Soviet Union before 9 November. This did not happen, however. Instead of packing, he started making inquiries on the procedures for marrying a Soviet citizen. It is said that he was last seen in one of the registry offices.

Such marriages can hardly surprise anybody in Moscow these days. The American officials, however, were not only surprised but seriously concerned. "So far there is no evidence that the vanished engineer has given the KGB information on supersecret electronic spying equipment, but officials in Washington are quite concerned," says NEWSWEEK.

It is possible that certain people will spoil the American engineer's honeymoon. "A security service special team is now hunting for Clayton," the article goes on to say. "However, there is a limit to what the United States can do: Clayton has not committed any crime, and since he was dismissed, he has no obligations toward Washington." Still, for some people the event is incomprehensible. "We cannot just grab him and tie him up," NEWSWEEK quotes an unidentified American official. "But it is strange that he may get away with it just like that. He should talk to us and allay our concerns."

Northeast Asia

Ukraine Independence Complicates Japanese Loan

PM1112170991 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 7 Dec 91 First Edition p 3

[TASS-REUTER report under the "Reflected in the Press" rubric: "Unexpected Effect of Independence"]

[Text] The victory of the advocates of Ukrainian independence could complicate the actual granting of the Japanese food credit worth $100 million promised to the former Soviet Union as far back as December of last year. Kojo Watanabe, Japan's minister of international trade and industry, declared that in the new conditions his government will have to seek fresh guarantees that this grant will be repaid from the financial organs of individual republics if current events finally "shatter confidence" in the USSR Bank for Foreign Economic Activity as an organ of the central authorities, which are rapidly losing ground.

DPRK Envoy on Withdrawal of U.S. Arms

SK1212021891 Moscow Radio Moscow in Korean 1100 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Commentary by DPRK Ambassador Son Song-pil from the "Focus on Asia" program; date and place not given]

[Text] Before going to the main points, I am going to give a brief summary of the DPRK Foreign Ministry statement released on 25 November to help you understand my talk for today.

Assessing and responding to the U.S. President Bush's announcement on withdrawing tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea and the South Korean authorities' declaration of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the DPRK Foreign Ministry's statement expresses first of all that the DPRK will sign the nuclear safeguard accord when the U.S. begins withdrawing the nuclear weapons.

Second, the DPRK Foreign Ministry's statement demands a simultaneous nuclear inspection to ascertain the existence of U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea as well as the inspection of nuclear facilities in the DPRK.

Third, the statement also demands holding DPRK-U.S. talks to discuss the issue of simultaneous nuclear inspection and the issue of removing the nuclear threat to the DPRK.

Fourth, it also calls for North-South negotiations to realize the common intention not to develop the nuclear weapons and to denuclearize the Korean peninsula.

Some length of time has passed since this statement was issued. Recently we have heard reports that the U.S. has started withdrawing nuclear weapons from South Korea. It would be good if the reports were true, but it is hard to believe this only on the remarks of those who are not the owners of the nuclear weapons.

The owner of the nuclear weapons is the United States. Therefore, the U.S. Government has the responsibility of withdrawing the nuclear weapons. This is the reason we welcomed Bush's announcement of withdrawing the nuclear weapons from South Korea, and, in response, formally declared that the DPRK will sign the nuclear safeguard accord upon the outset of withdrawal no matter when that is.

We cannot understand why the U.S., the party concerned, remains silent when it is widely reported that the U.S. has started withdrawing the nuclear weapons from South Korea.

If it is confirmed that the U.S. has really started withdrawing nuclear weapons, the DPRK will sign the nuclear safeguard accord as promised. Therefore, we hope that the U.S. will positively respond to our proposal as soon as possible.

As for the DPRK's signing the nuclear safeguard accord, the issue of nuclear inspection has been brought up as a very complicated issue in our country and we have an earnest desire to resolve this issue.

With such a desire we sincerely urge the U.S. to expedite withdrawing of the nuclear weapons and to declare the withdrawal to the public so that we can sign the nuclear safeguard accords after conforming the withdrawal. All the problems, I think, can be solved smoothly.

In as much as you create impartial public opinion on worldwide situations and issues, I would like to ask you to propagate the DPRK's sincere stance to heartily solve the problems caused by the issue of the nuclear safeguard accord and nuclear inspection.

DPRK-ROK Ministerial Talks Begin in Seoul

SK1112095691 Moscow Radio Moscow in Korean 1100 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Text] The DPRK has expressed the hope that an agreement with the ROK on reconciliation, nonaggression, cooperation, and exchanges will be signed. This was stated by the head of the DPRK delegation today in Seoul.

The delegation arrived in Seoul to participate in the fifth round of the North-South ministerial talks for alleviating the military and political tensions on the Korean peninsula.

The DPRK expects that the nuclear issue will be resolved in a way that satisfies the Korean people.

As everyone knows, Seoul is expressing concern over reports that the DPRK is developing nuclear weapons, although Pyongyang denies it.

Near East & South Asia

Iraqi Uranium Moved Through Moscow Airport

924P0042A Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 3 Dec 91 Union Edition p 8

[Article by V. Belykh: "Container with Nuclear Fuel from Iraq Brought through Moscow's Sheremetyevo-2 Airport Without Fanfare"]

[Text] **Almost no one remembered that this AN-12 aircraft flew into Sheremetyevo-2 Airport on the night of 18 November. What distinguished it from the general traffic perhaps was the unusual "United Nations flight No. UN-531." Even during the inspection, one of the customs officials refused point-blank to enter the aircraft. So, the formalities did not take up a lot of time. And the group in civilian clothes that met it, after taking the cargo, departed with it for the city of Elektrostal, not far from Moscow...**

That is how the operation ended in the shipment from Iraq of 11 containers with fresh "nuclear" fuel. More than 12 kilograms of enriched Uranium-235 were transported on two flights on 15 and 18 November through the country's main international airport from the Middle East.

When, hoping to get comments, I called up Sergey Adamchik, chairman of Gospromatomnadzor [State Committee for Industrial Nuclear Supervision] of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, he was quite surprised, and he repeated several times: He was unable even to imagine that someone would take the wild idea into his head to land an aircraft with such unusual cargo at a civilian airport...

It is probably possible to understand this lack of information on the part of the chairman of the Russian committee, who is called on to protect us from all kinds

of radiation and nuclear surprises... His department was created quite recently, and it has not yet earnestly gotten down to work. But, as it turned out, his "Union" colleague Vadim Malyshev, chairman of the now abolished USSR Gospromatomnadzor, was also completely in the dark.

Was this what happened, or not? It did not take long to figure out. The uranium transport operation was arranged by the USSR Ministry of Atomic Power and Industry, which in recent years has presented us with more than one terrible surprise.

But everything began rather nobly. After the defeat of Iraq, when the UN Security Council speculated that Iraq was engaged in creating a nuclear weapon, it resolved to deprive the defeated country of all material necessary for this purpose.

I succeeded in finding a participant in these events, Petr Lavrenyuk, deputy general director of the Tvel [fuel element] concern of the Ministry of Atomic Power and Industry.

"Approximately 40 kilometers from Baghdad, in a nuclear center near the town of Tuvayt [as transliterated], IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] specialists found a Soviet RT-2m reactor, 'fresher,' and spent nuclear fuel for it," he recounts. "As it turned out, it was basically produced here in our country, and it was transferred under contract to Iraq in 1983-85. The uranium was based on aluminum alloys, and, speaking in our language, 68 products were 80-percent enriched, and 10 were 36- percent enriched. IAEA—the International Atomic Energy Agency—offered to pay us to take this uranium, reprocess it in our country, deplete it, and return it to the disposition of the agency. AN-12 transport aircraft from the Scientific Research Institute of Civil Aviation were found with a crew of test pilots. Eleven special heavy-duty containers were delivered from the Union to Iraq. Inasmuch as the operation was international, the flight was given a United Nations Organization number, UN-531.

So what kind of cargo did they intend to carry? Overall, the most dangerous was the "spent" nuclear fuel. This is what gives off awful radiation. The yet unused "fresh" fuel is much "stabler" (and it is this that UN-531 conveyed, representatives of the Ministry of Atomic Power and Industry assert). In its Tvel packaging, it gives off a radiation background that is not much higher than the natural background.

We asked Vladimir Fedin, first deputy chief of the Main Administration of the USSR Gospromatomenergonadzor [State Committee for Industrial Nuclear Energy Supervision], for a more detailed evaluation of the "Iraq cargo." He explained that Uranium-235 belongs to radiation danger group B (there are a total of four, and the most dangerous is A), and this is rather serious. But what is most frightening here is something else. Given this kind of uranium enrichment, a spontaneous nuclear reaction is possible in the event of an aircraft disaster. To put it simply, an explosion.

Petr Lavrenyuk also did not exclude such a possibility. It is true he talked a lot about flight safety measures, about the reliability of the containers, and about how improbable it is for so many of the most diverse circumstances to coincide to bring about a chain reaction, but he could not entirely exclude the probability, albeit insignificant, that a UN-531 accident at the Moscow airport could lead to incredible consequences. In such a case, it would be more logical to land the aircraft with the uranium away from heavily populated places. Nothing of the sort.

The Iraqi's loaded the AN-12 at the airfield of the Al Habbaniyah military base, after organizing a powerful multilayered guard for this. Officials of our nuclear industry brought the containers directly to the country's main international airport. When I tried to get an explanation as to why specifically Moscow, Sheremetyevo-2, and not to a remote military airfield, I was told ingenuously: "Because there is a customs office there..."

Obedience to the law is touching. Except that, as specialists explained to us, the law in this operation was breached in every way. After delivering the uranium to a heavily populated area, the nuclear workers did not inform either the Gospromatomnadzor or the Ministry of Health, also setting aside the 1988 ukase of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium and IAEA documents, according to which inspection of this kind of material should be independent of the organization that is carrying out the development and use of nuclear energy in the country. The ministry was restricted many times by its own obedient departmental control. Therefore, incidentally, it is difficult to be confident that the containers that were transported on 15 and 18 November from the nuclear center in Iraq to Sheremetyevo-2 were not in some way more terrifying than "fresh" fuel from Uranium-235...

It is a strange time now: Union supervision over the games of the nuclear engineers seems not to exist any longer, but republic supervision has not been quite born yet. And who knows how many cargoes of this kind are still rattling around our civilian airports? For example, this is not known at Sheremetyevo-2 Airport. Even Boris Churkov, airport general director for security, got the information about UN-531's "stuffing" accidentally, from us.

"Apparently this was a military flight," he suggested, "and they transport everything imaginable through us, even an atom bomb. Who can check this out? After all, everything is classified..."

West Europe

Union Republics, EC Forge Credit Guidelines

LD1112193291 Moscow TASS in English 1830 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow December 11 TASS—Twelve Soviet republics and the Commission of European Communities [CEC] forged, during their meeting in Moscow on Tuesday [10 December], guidelines for the use of the EC's second credit to the USSR, Gennadiy Kulik, deputy chairman of the Inter-State Economic Management Committee, told a news conference here today.

The credit, worth 1.25 billion ECU [European Currency Units] (1.5 billion dollars), is issued for a five-year term (instead of usual two-year terms) to buy food and medical supplies.

The CEC delegation insisted that at least fifty percent of this amount should go to purchase food in East European countries and thus help restore traditional economic ties between them and the Soviet Union. These links are now frozen as both sides lack hard currency to settle mutual accounts, Kulik said. According to Kulik, the CEC delegation confirmed the possibility of food purchases from Yugoslavia, but said it would specify additionally which Yugoslav republics may cooperate with the USSR within the framework of the credit. During the meeting in Moscow, representatives of all 12 republics reiterated their joint and individual responsibility for repaying the cost of food supplies bought with the credit money.

Kulik said supplies, totaling five million tons of grain, 240,000 tons of meat, 25,000 tons of powdered milk, 90,000 tons of butter and 100,000 tons of vegetable oil, as well as 100 million dollars- worth of medical supplies, bought with the new credit, will be delivered in late January and early February.

It was also agreed that food supplies would be brought in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The share of each of the twelve republics of the former Union in the total amount of the new credit was determined on Tuesday, Kulik said.

EC Ready To Help in Forming Customs Policy

PM1212112791 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 7 Dec 91 p 3

[G. Bilyalitdinova report: "Will the EEC Help Us?"]

[Text] Moscow—Daniel Pyeryu [surname as transliterated] and Massimo Giffoni—representatives of the EC Commission General Directorate—held a press conference yesterday at the USSR Customs Committee. The aim of their trip is to acquaint themselves with the work to form a single customs space on the territory of what was the USSR.

"We have accumulated a great deal of experience in organizing unified customs policy," Daniel Pyeryu told journalists. "Our community now includes 12 countries and that is not the limit. Within the framework of our community we have conducted studies showing the advantages of free movement. A single enclosed space has no need of customs posts. We took 30 years to reach these conclusions."

The EEC is willing to provide the independent republics with technical and financial assistance in organizing a single customs territory and in implementing customs policy and unified tariffs.

Yesterday's press conference was the first for Anatoliy Kruglov, chairman of the RSFSR Customs Committee.

"Our main task," he said, "is to enhance the customs posts' material and technical base. There must be a customs post with a developed infrastructure operating in every region. Regrettably, none of Russia's 150 customs posts meet contemporary requirements. We have an acute need today of professional cadres. One promising area for training cadres is to enlist Soviet Army officers discharged into the reserve. We will give precedence to those who have served abroad. Lastly: We will focus our attention on resolving customs officers' social questions—housing, children's establishments, and recreation."

EC Adopts Statement on Union Situation

LD1212054591 Moscow TASS in English 1312 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondents D. Voskoboinikov, E. Kleshkov, and V. Shashkov]

[Text] Maastricht December 11 TASS—An event of history- making significance has taken place in Europe: 12 member states of the European Community have finally agreed to create a political, monetary and financial alliance, thus laying the foundation of an interstate association of an entirely new type, a union of West European states and constitutional monarchies.

At the very time the Soviet Union actually ceased to exist on the other end of Europe. The European Community will be called the European Union. At the session of the European Council, which ended early on Wednesday [11 December] morning, the heads of state and government of the European Community member states managed to complete the coordination of the texts of two treaties, which will make it possible to introduce a single currency by the end of the century. They are starting a process to work out and pursue common foreign and security policies.

Since participants in the session spent much time trying to find compromise solutions within the framework of the treaties, they devoted less attention to the quickly changing situation in "what was previously the Soviet Union", as Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek

put it at a news conference. Still, they adopted a statement on the situation in the Soviet Union.

It stresses "the European Council underlines the necessity for a constructive dialogue among all parties concerned to ensure the process of transformation of the Soviet Union ... continues in a peaceful, democratic and orderly manner." The EC member states welcomed the fact "the three republics engaged in this comprehensive process of change have declared that they mutually recognise and respect each other's territorial integrity and the inviolability of the borders existing in the context of the commonwealth."

The European Council was pleased to note the republics have reaffirmed their readiness to respect international commitments of the Soviet Union and to ensure single control of nuclear weapons on their territory.

Nevertheless, it says nothing about the recognition of the state independence of Russia and its partners. According to the statement, the European Council "took notice" both of the decision of the three republics to create a "commonwealth of independent states" and of Gorbachev's statement of December 9.

The EC member states decided to render food assistance to residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg. On the insistence of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, heads of state and government of the EC countries expressed readiness to allocate 320 million dollars for this purpose, a spokesman for the Commission of European Communities—the executive authority of the Common Market—said here.

Congress of People's Deputies

Samarin Heads Group Backing Congress Initiative

OW1112032491 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2102 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] December 10th, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev asserted his support for the idea of calling an extraordinary congress of Soviet peoples' deputies at a meeting with Vladimir Samarin, head of the initiative group for convening a congress.

In an interview with "IF" [INTERFAX] Samarin noted that, in Gorbachev's opinion, the only institution which could make a decision in the increasingly difficult and dead end situation would be a congress of peoples' deputies. The question of whether or not a congress will be called should be decided in the coming days and it would be called according to normal constitutional protocol.

At the same time Sergey Shakhray, adviser to the Russian President on legal issues, spoke on Tuesday to Soviet peoples' deputies from the Russian Federation, and said that by law since September 5th of this year the Soviet congress of peoples' deputies had been dissolved, and that the corresponding articles had been introduced into the Constitution, which would make calling a congress itself anti-constitutional.

Congress Could Open 25 Dec

LD1112143691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1257 GMT 11 Dec 91

[From the "Television News Service" program]

[Text] At the headquarters of the initiative group for convening a sixth Emergency Congress of People's Deputies it has been announced that the Congress probably could begin work on 25 December. Many appeals are coming into the Committee for Constitutional Supervision of the USSR regarding the assessment of the constitutional legality of the situation that has developed as a result of the signing by three republics of the agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. It has been decided to gather the Committee for Constitutional Supervision today, 11 December, to examine the relevant issues that lie within its competence.

Requisite Signatures Expected 12 Dec

OW1112122291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1129 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Vladimir Samarin, one of the main figures among those favouring the convocation of an extraordinary Congress of USSR People's Deputies to discuss the Commonwealth agreement, has said that by Thursday night the organizers are hoping to have collected the 442 signatures (1/5 of the total number of deputies) needed for the congress to take place.

Mr. Samarin said among those who have already signed the congress appeal, representatives of Russia and the Ukraine made up a majority. He expressed concern over the possible recall of Russian and Belorussian deputies, but said that the majority of Russian MPs [members of parliament] would hopefully be present at the congress. Samarin did not rule out the RSFSR leadership might go all the way to disrupt the convocation of a congress at a time when "unlawful decisions are being taken on a large scale."

Congress initiators are planning to hold a news conference at the Maliy Hall of the USSR Supreme Soviet at 14:00 Thursday. Vladimir Samarin is expected to make a speech.

People's Deputies' Declaration

924B0131A Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 10 December 91 p 1

[Declaration of USSR people's deputies: "We Demand a Congress!"]

[Text] Under the conditions of the real threat of the disintegration of the multinational state and the country's rapid approach of political and socioeconomic catastrophe and also in accordance with Article 110 of the USSR Constitution and the expressed will of our electorate, we the undersigned people's deputies of the USSR declare the need for the immediate convening of the Sixth, Special, Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

It is essential to place on the congress agenda questions of measures for the restoration of constitutional order throughout the territory of the country and the formulation of radical and economic decisions capable of halting the chaos and anarchy and the fall in the people's living standard and of averting the escalation of interethnic feuding and the threat of civil war.

We are prepared to undertake the preparation and organization of the Sixth, Special, Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and share responsibility for the decisions it adopts.

[Signed] USSR People's Deputies V.I. Samarin, G.N. Kiselev, V.N. Fominykh, V.S. Advadze, V.I. Tso, I.A. Andreyeva, U.Sh. Orozova, and others.

Supreme Soviet

Joint Session To Discuss Minsk Agreement

OW1212123291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1208 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] A joint session of the houses of the national parliament intends to discuss the situation in the light of the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States by three republics. Many MPs [members of parliament] do not believe in confrontation with the parliaments of Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus. There is a possibility of a proposal to appeal to the parliaments of all Soviet republics to join the agreement of the three.

In the morning the House of the Republics refrained from a discussion of the matter. The chairman of the House Anuarbek Alimzhanov suggested waiting for the results of the summit meeting of Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan beginning in Ashkhabad at noon. Another conference is planned for Saturday in Alma-Ata. Yeltsin as well as Kravchuk and Shushkevich have been invited.

Alimzhanov stressed that the Ashkhabad conference "is not a meeting of the Muslim side, there is no confrontation here."

A representative of Belarus Viktor Kornienko announced the decision of the Belarussian parliament to recall its deputies from the Soviet national parliament and other government bodies and give them the status of observers.

Gorbachev Not To Speak

LD1212130191 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] According to Konstantin Lyubenchenko, Gorbachev will not make a speech at the USSR Supreme Soviet today.

Council Chief: Brest Accord 'Completely Illegal'

LD1012200291 Moscow TASS in English 1718 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 10 TASS—The agreement signed by the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia on Sunday is "completely illegal," Konstantin Lyubenchenko, head of the Soviet parliamentary Council of the Union, said on Tuesday.

In a statement to the mass media, Lyubenchenko said the document is "somewhat premature and badly thought-out and is aimed to put an end to the existence of the former union and its bodies."

Commenting on the legal aspects of the agreement and its political consequences and prospects for Russia, Lyubenchenko stressed this is "a dangerous precedent, which can have far-reaching consequences for the political development of each republic individually and the Soviet Union as a whole."

"The agreement can generate new contradictions between the Russian Government and political movements," Lyubenchenko said.

He believes that "under these circumstances, the Soviet parliament is one of the few forces able to guarantee the union's integrity."

Foresees 'Serious Consequences'

OW1212091191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2100 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet's Council of the Union Konstantin Lyubenchenko has issued a statement sharply criticizing the treaty concluded by Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia.

The statement says in particular that the treaty means the legal collapse of the Soviet Union fraught with serious consequences [sentence as received]. Moreover, the fact of its signing contradicts with the Union and international laws. In the opinion of Mr. Lyubenchenko, the treaty will pose a serious problem concerning the control over nuclear arms on the territory of the former Union and aggravate ethnic and religious conflicts.

The statement points out that in the present situation the USSR Supreme Soviet is becoming the only force capable of ensuring the territorial integrity of the former Union. The Union parliament will carry out its duties to the end, no matter what the USSR President's position would be, the statement notes.

Committee Rejects Commonwealth Accord

LD1112175491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1705 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondents Lyudmila Yermakova and Yuriy Vdovin: "Constitutional Compliance Committee on the agreement between the heads of three republics"]

[Text] Moscow, 11 Dec (TASS)—The claim that the "USSR has ceased to exist as an entity in international law and as a geopolitical reality" was deemed "without judicial force" by the USSR Constitutional Compliance Committee today. This claim is contained in the agreement on the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States which was signed last Sunday by the heads of Belarus, Russia, and the Ukraine. According to a statement circulated today, the committee considers that such a statement can be viewed only in the capacity of a political evaluation of the situation.

As sovereign states, the republics have the right to conclude treaties on interstate associations among themselves and with other states, the statement says. At the same time, republics cannot on their own accord take it upon themselves to resolve issues concerning the rights and interests of others, the Constitutional Compliance Committee believes. Similarly, in their view, it also is worth examining the article in the agreement on the bodies of the former USSR ceasing their activities on the territories of the Commonwealth member-states. They can cease their activities only after the issue of the

USSR's fate is settled in a constitutionally correct manner and after the legal successors to its rights and obligations are determined. The document emphasizes that any other approach to this issue is capable of causing a dangerous lack of control in society, including in the defense of the country.

Members of the committee also are deeply concerned about the statement to the effect that the norms of third parties, including the former USSR, are not applicable on the territories of these states. The legal vacuum that will result in this case might negatively affect the civil rights and liberties, as well as the regulation of the social relations that remain within the sphere of the joint activities of the Commonwealth members. The committee also has pointed out that international and interrepublican agreements signed by the presidents or other plenipotentiary representatives of the states come into force only after their ratification by the Supreme Soviets.

Soviet of Republics Appeals to Republics

LD1112183891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1734 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 11 December (TASS)—Anuarbek Alimzhanov, chairman of the Soviet of the Republics, has sent a telegram to the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan. The message states in particular:

"About a month and a half has passed since the new USSR Supreme Soviet was created and started its work at the initiative of the heads of the sovereign states and on the basis of the law.

"Its upper chamber—the Soviet of the Republics, working under the flags of the independent states, as a fundamentally new body formed by the will of their supreme soviets and working in constant contact with them—is today the only interstate representative structure capable of guaranteeing a concerted examination of issues that are of interest to all our peoples, on the basis of equal rights and consensus.

"The Soviet of the Republics stands for the restoration and development of peaceful and neighborly relations between peoples, for trust and accord in society, and for the successful conduct and completion of the process of creating a new interstate commonwealth based on the will of the republics and the interests of the peoples.

"I express the hope that as the republics resolve the issue of new forms of interstate relations, they will continue to support the idea of the need for their joint representative body, consisting of authorized deputations from the republics, which is responsible to them for their activities."

Soviet of Union Backs Bank Credit Resolution

PM0912124791 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 4 Dec 91 First Edition p 1

[Parliamentary observer Robert Minasov report: "In the Union Parliament. Deficit of Money and... Common Sense"]

[Excerpt] Kremlin—The protracted debate in the Soviet of the Union on the draft resolution "On USSR State Bank Credits To Finance All-Union Expenditure in 1991" entered a new phase at the morning session yesterday when the resolution of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium "On Relations With the Union Budget Until the End of 1991" found its way into parliamentarians' hands.

And so, Russia has decided to shoulder the lion's share of the deficit: more than 80 billion of the 90.5 billion. True, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium at the same time proposes that possibilities of reducing Union budget expenditure be examined.

The Soviet of the Union, through Viktor Gubarev, chairman of the Budget and Finance Commission, proposed to leave the decision on this question to the State Council and the Interstate Committee, sending the Russians' proposals to these two bodies and recommending that an agreement on the budget be concluded between the states in the Economic Community before 10 December. In his opinion, shifting the burden of the deficit from Union to republic level without coordinating the positions of the sovereign states might provoke a deterioration in their relations.

He stressed, however, that the proposals of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium might be a good basis for concluding an agreement on the budget between states.

Aleksandr Kuzmin called on the parliaments of the former union republics to follow Russia's example and not support the proposed draft on credits. However, the Soviet of the Union, contrary to common sense, supported the proposed draft on credits. [passage omitted]

Parliament Ignores Gorbachev Plea

924B0118A Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 4 Dec 91 p 1

[Article by S. Oganyan: "Scenes from an Unsuccessful Play"]

[Text] **This is exactly the way one of the deputies of the Soviet of the Republics defined the effectiveness of the work of his own chamber yesterday. To be fair, this description could fit the deputies of the Soviet of the Union as well.**

A strange situation has developed in the Supreme Soviet of the country. As recently as last week the Soviet of the Republics, the upper chamber of parliament, reached a decision on credit to finance all-Union expenditures.

The decision is final, and it confronts the lower chamber with the necessity of agreeing with it. But, nonetheless, the deputies of the Soviet of the Union began the day precisely with the financial question. The discussion was sharp, as it was supposed to be, and specific culprits named who were given "credit" not only for the budget breakdown but also for the breakdown of the country that followed; proposals were made one after the other that were progressively more radical, and appeals could be heard "to moderate the appetite of the military-industrial complex." In a word, the chamber demonstrated an envious activeness and capacity for work.

But at that very same time a proposal was heard in the meeting auditorium of the Soviet of the Republics to eliminate the lower chamber. This opinion was expressed during the discussion of the Union treaty.

Before the beginning of the meeting here, in the Supreme Soviet, an appeal by M. Gorbachev was distributed to the country's parliamentarians. Restrained in lyrical-dramatic tones, the message describes the state of society that we are now living through. Increasing anxiety over the life of our country prompted me to appeal to you, the president writes. It is going through a crisis of statehood that is tearing the economy apart, obstructing and ruining the process of reform, deforming morals and manners, and setting peoples against each other.

It must be said that the pictures of the apocalypse that M. Gorbachev draws did not produce an oppressive impression on the deputies. Life presents each of us with even more depressing examples. And, typically, not one of the parliamentarians who took the floor desired even to refer to the appeal of the president, which was directed to them. Moreover, the representative of Belarus, as a matter of fact, proposed to stop the discussion of the draft Union treaty. Important policy, he said, is not made here but in the republic parliaments. But this is today. Tomorrow, the streets will dictate policy, but then it will already be late. The deputy believes that to discuss the draft Union treaty here, in the Kremlin, behind drawn curtains, is illogical.

Snegur, Other Deputies Submit Resignations

924B0118A Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 4 Dec 91 p 1

[Unattributed article: "The Deputy Corps 'Got Thinner'"]

[Text] Boris Yeltsin's announcement on the early termination of his authority as a USSR people's deputy yesterday was complied with by the Soviet of the Union of the USSR Supreme Soviet. It will be recalled that, in accordance with the constitution of the Russian Federation, the president of the RSFSR cannot be a people's deputy.

By a decree of the Soviet of the Union, the authority of another 14 USSR people's deputies, whose names are well known in the country, was canceled. They gave various reasons in their statements for leaving the deputy corps. Mircea Snegur, for example—in connection with the announcement of the independence of Moldova, and Valentin Golubev—reluctance to be a deputy of the CPSU, whose leadership has cast a shadow on the entire party of communists with their disgraceful inaction during the August events.

Official Discusses Possible Coup Participants

LD1112191591 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1700 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Report on interview with Aleksandr Alekseyevich Kotenkov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet Committee for Defense and State Security Issues, by correspondent Lyudmila Semina; place and date not given]

[Text] Various accounts of a planned coup d'etat have been reported by the mass media lately. One of the proposed dates reportedly is 12 December. Our correspondent, Lyudmila Semina, asked Aleksandr Alekseyevich Kotenkov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet Committee for Defense and State Security Issues [name and title as heard].

[Begin recording] [Kotenkov] Unfortunately, there is no insurance against it, but if one tries to imagine possible driving forces behind this coup and its main executors, I do not yet see structures that are able to exercise force, the structures that are most spoken about as possible driving forces behind this coup.

Now Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] confirmed yet again that the armed forces, in principle, will not opt for that. Tonight, my colleagues, chairmen of other committees of the still-existing Supreme Soviet, and myself should meet with the leaders of our so- called bodies that are able to exercise force: the security service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Defense. We want to ask the following question: What guarantees are there that these bodies will not participate if such attempts are made? The main thing is that we have services that are supposed to specifically watch these processes. We would ask for this information to be presented to us.

However, if you are talking about Zhirinovskiy and company, this force might be able to be stirred up, but it is unlikely it will be able to have the people take any serious steps and it is unlikely that this force will be supported by any serious structures that are able to exercise force. To my great regret, there is another structure that now has gone deep underground, but there is no direct data that they will find support in the bodies I spoke of.

[Semina] Do you mean the military-industrial complex or the party?

[Kotenkov] I mean the CPSU. We do not have any doubts about this. As a matter of fact, there is certain

data that this organization has gone underground and that it has developed an active presence now, and it is not excluded that it will become one of the driving forces of this coup. So far, I cannot see any other driving forces. [end recording]

Political & Social

Gorbachev Position on Commonwealth, Power Reported

Grachev on Gorbachev's Power

LD1112144591 Berlin ADN in German 1414 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow (ADN)—According to presidential spokesman Andrey Grachev, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev does not intend to fight for political power. Grachev told the Moscow agency RUSSIAN INFORMATION AGENCY today that Gorbachev will also not insist on an office in the new Commonwealth of Independent States. "It is also now not a question of defending Gorbachev as president. Rather, it is a question of resolving the transition to a new order of sovereign and independent states in a democratic and civilized way," the presidential spokesman said.

Grachev reaffirmed that the Soviet head of state continues to reject the use of violence as a means to implement political aims. Gorbachev will not take a decision alone on the convening of the Congress of People's Deputies. "He thinks that the deputies should decide on this question themselves," Grachev stated.

Yakovlev on Gorbachev Resignation

OW1212003091 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1700 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] It has been suggested in the circles close to the USSR President that an acceptance of the Minsk agreements need not mean an absence of presidency in the new Commonwealth. Mikhail Gorbachev's adviser Georgiy Shakhnazarov said Wednesday [11 December] night to an INTERFAX correspondent, "I don't think the USSR President is about to resign. He intends to act according to the logic of developing situation".

According to INTERFAX's information, the President's official response to the developing political situation may be expected on Thursday [12 December].

Yeltsin on Meeting With Gorbachev

OW1212032091 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2044 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia's President Boris Yeltsin has told journalists that his Wednesday's [11 December] meeting with USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev was devoted to "our idea of the future commonwealth and how soon it can start acting without any central control". "I wouldn't say", he added, "that Gorbachev supports us, but any resistance, particularly by force, is ruled out. Equally out are developments on the Yugoslav model—anything like a civil war. Such threats are just unworthy", stressed Russia's President. In his words, "today's meeting with Gorbachev was not so hard-going as the day before yesterday, or as yesterday's telephone talk".

Boris Yeltsin held a brief press-conference after receiving a "Golden Bamby" award from the Burda Moden magazine.

He expressed satisfaction over his Wednesday's meeting with the military. According to the USSR Defence Minister Marshal Shaposhnikov, went on Yeltsin, a poll of the generals and marshals who had taken part in the meeting showed they were also satisfied.

The fact that Ukraine is setting up its own army, said Boris Yeltin, doesn't undermine the Minsk agreement. The strategic forces will be under a single command of the defence union. "An agreement on such a union should be signed separately", stressed Russia's President.

In his prize acceptance speech Boris Yeltsin mentioned a firm opinion shared by all the participants of the Minsk meeting that nuclear arms should be under joint control. He expressed hope that Russia's parliamentarians will display common sense and reason while deliberating on Thursday on the ratification of the agreement.

Boris Yeltsin referred to the August putsch as "death throes of the agonizing totalitarian system".

Gorbachev on 'Difficult Period'

LD1212061491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0531 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 12 Dec (TASS)—I have entered the most difficult period of my political life, Mikhail Gorbachev, the country's president, said in an interview with the editor in chief of NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, excerpts of which are published today. But I remain a convinced advocate of the following approach: The Union treaty is simply necessary as a basis for reforming our state.

The time has already come to say, the USSR president stressed, that I personally am not going to strive for a role in future structures. I am fighting for the fact that we need a union state, "a soft union" in the sense that sovereign states themselves agree, and themselves form a center, which they need. As president, Mikhail Gorbachev said in the interview, I will do everything so that the process of separation develops within a constitutional framework. I will respect the people's choice if it is constitutional, he stressed.

I bear the greatest responsibility for the things that are taking place in the country, the president said, and therefore I will use all opportunities until an agreed solution on what our state will be is found. Speaking

about the tripartite accord, Mikhail Gorbachev stressed that if it is presented as a final solution, it is unacceptable, but if it is a contribution to something that should be discussed and synthesized together with the Union treaty, then it is another matter. One should use the positive points of this accord. I will agree with the choice made by representative bodies and the people, the USSR president stressed.

In his interview Mikhail Gorbachev stressed the need to hold a meeting with republicans leaders in Moscow on the subject of "what, after all, has happened, and where are we now."

Need for 'Soft Union'

OW1212123391 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1208 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Excerpts] Mikhail Gorbachev has confirmed his loyalty to the Union treaty as "the basis for reforming our multiethnic state". In an interview published on Thursday [12 December] in NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA he expressed the opinion that the formation of national states, even in the form of a commonwealth, "will complicate interaction".

"Maybe it is time to say, Gorbachev remarked, that I do not intend to claim a role in future structures." [quote marks as received] [passage omitted]

Gorbachev believes that the positive aspects of the Minsk agreement should be used: "I will agree with the choice of elected bodies and the people".

He was asked whether he intends to use his position of the Commander-in-chief for defending his understanding of the future of the country. To this he replied that he will use his position primarily to take care of the Army instead of shaking this key government institution.

"I do not think a politician who enters the road of using the Armed Forces for attaining his political aims deserves support. He should be rejected and damned. No one has the right to play the army card", the president stressed.

Mikhail Gorbachev does not believe in the possibility of a military coup in the near future: The democrats will not do that, while reactionary forces despite all their efforts to rally after the putsch will fail to use the Army.

Gorbachev Meets Media

LD1212122891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1130 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 12 Dec (TASS)—USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev says that if the representative bodies of the republics approve the process of forming a new commonwealth of states, a process started in Brest, then he will go along with this choice and be ready to participate in the process and consult with colleagues from the republics. However, he thinks that such a course may lead to the country's disintegration.

Mikhail Gorbachev met Soviet mass media representatives in the Kremlin today. The situation that has taken shape in the country was discussed at the two-hour meeting.

The main thing, he said, is for the process of forming the new commonwealth to help the peoples find a way out of this universal crisis. Nevertheless, the USSR president remains a supporter of a confederative union state and is not convinced that it can be achieved during the Brest process. Were an amorphous structure to replace the union state, he does not see a place for himself in it and will resign on matters of principle [uydet v otstavku po printsipialnym soobrazheniyam].

Mikhail Gorbachev admitted that the Brest process could lead to the formation of a union "from below." He said the agreements signed in Belarus would change as other republics joined them and would be filled out with the mechanisms of implementation of these agreements.

"I am for society deliberately making a choice, but, as yet, I cannot free myself of the impression that the destruction of the state is taking place," Mikhail Gorbachev said.

The USSR president's most general position, which he outlined at the meeting, is: He is doing everything so that the people's choice may be made within the constitutional frameworks.

Further on Talk With Newsmen

OW1212150491 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1450 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] "There is only one situation which will compel me to resign: If the endeavours to preserve the Union are given up", said the USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev during his two-hour talk with newsmen in the Kremlin on Thursday [12 December].

With reference to the new political realities forming in the wake of the Minsk agreements the USSR President said: "This is Burbulis's concept whose essence is that Russia has already lost much of what it gained as a result of frustrating the coup. In the meantime the crafty Gorbachev continues to weave nets. The center which has long ceased to exist still oppresses the Russian leadership", the USSR President added.

His attitude to the Union is the same, Gorbachev declared, but he will respect the option made by representative government bodies.

Mikhail Gorbachev's talk with reporters will be presented in more detail later.

'Major Task' Accomplished

OW1212152191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1450 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The major task of my life has been accomplished, said the USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev calmly and in an even voice, opening this morning's meeting with newsmen. According to IF's [INTERFAX] correspondents V. Terekhov and B. Grischenko, analysing his political career, the USSR President said: "If others were in my place, they would have given up long ago. However I managed to push through the main ideas of perestroyka, even though not without mistakes".

Mikhail Gorbachev reaffirmed his adherence to the idea of union. He said he feared that as a result of the Minsk agreements "this country will be cut like a pie". He fears, he said, that today we are laying a delayed-action mine which will blast the commonwealth sooner or later.

According to M. Gorbachev, a big mistake, disintegration of the USSR, is being committed. But, as a staunch democrat, he believes that his main task is to make it possible for the peoples to implement their option by constitutional means.

He believes, the USSR President warned, that in the present political conditions nationalist and chauvinist-minded leaders might come to power. There are vigorous endeavors to play this card now, he said.

According to him what the people need now is a stable country, a reformed union. He dismissed the charges of his political opponents that he initiated the disintegration of the union. The USSR President quoted Leonid Kravchuk as saying that the Soviet Union began to fall apart in 1985. "Think for yourselves what disintegration L. Kravchuk referred to", the President told newsmen.

Mikhail Gorbachev highly assessed integration processes taking place in the framework of the EEC. In Maastricht, he said, Britain played the role of the Ukraine. But they managed to stop in time there.

'Obstructionist Statement'

OW1212090291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2100 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The chief of the USSR president's office, Grigoriy Revenko, has told IF [INTERFAX] that the themes discussed with the military by President Gorbachev, of the USSR, and President Yeltsin, of Russia, "fitted in perfectly" with each other. For instance, both presidents paid particular attention to the role and position of the armed forces in the wake of the Minsk agreements.

Revenko believes that the military reacted to President Gorbachev's statement "with full understanding." He said there was only one obstructionist statement.

According to independent military sources, in that obstructionist statement President Gorbachev was accused of an "attempt to split the Armed Forces" for his call to support the idea of convening a Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and holding a referendum on the agreements.

Yakovlev Concerned Over Union Break Up

LD1112192691 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1300 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] The state adviser to the USSR president, Aleksandr Yakovlev, has expressed concern over the break up of the Union. In his opinion, the same thing can happen to the Russian Federation itself, where many different ethnic groups reside. In an interview for the Moscow newspaper KURANTY, he warned against attempts to solve ethnic and political problems by force. That can in no way help, he said, but can lead to bloodshed. Aleksandr Yakovlev, who is one of the leaders of the Movement for Democratic Reforms, confirmed support of sweeping market reforms in Russia. At the same time he believes that while monopoly structures remain, the liberalization of prices will not make it possible to extend production. In the meantime, prices will keep growing. Aleksandr Yakovlev does not believe that an organized action of the people against the present leadership of Russia is possible, but there could be spontaneous ones.

Poll Shows Majority Support for Commonwealth

LD1212134291 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1030 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Text] Yesterday a sociological poll was conducted by the Interstate Independent Public Opinion Association under the leadership of Professor Ovsyannikov. It was conducted jointly with the Belarus Public Opinion Service and Kiev University's Sociological Association.

Expressing their opinion were 3,624 persons representing various social strata and regions of the republics. The results of the poll are as follows:

For Belorussia: 69 percent of those polled approve of the agreement; in Russia, 67 percent; in Ukraine, 62 percent.

The authors of the sociological poli draw the conclusion for all three independent states that the populations support the actions of their leaders. People are demanding the preservation of the union in any form.

Alksnis Affirms Faith in Rebirth of Union

PM1212095891 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 11 Dec 91 pp 1-2

[Interview with USSR People's Deputy Viktor Alksnis by N. Garifullina—date, place not stated: "'I Still Believe...'"]

[Text] Since the August events the disintegration of our mighty state has proceeded apace. In recent weeks developments have been reckoned in hours rather than days. On the evening of 8 December, television's first channel was still transmitting the recording of Mikhail Gorbachev's Ukrainian Television interview, in which he once again threatened to take every possible step to preserve the Union, yet meanwhile the ink had already dried on the agreement signed that day in Minsk by B. Yeltsin, S. Shushkevich, and L. Kravchuk, to the effect that the 1922 treaty on the formation of the USSR is null and void and the end of the Union is juridically formulated.

"Viktor Imantovich, what is your view of recent events?"—that was the question with which I began my conversation with USSR People's Deputy Viktor Alksnis.

[Alksnis] The thing we were warning of has happened. The petty princelings have made a deal among themselves: They had no right to declare the juridical end of the Union in the name of the peoples. The people did not authorize them to do so. Their will was expressed in the referendum. Today Gorbachev is trying with tears in his eyes to convince people that he is opposed to the disintegration of the state and is making feverish attempts to get some kind of hold on the situation—but in principle there is nothing to hold onto. If you look at the stenographic records of the Union sessions and congresses, it is obvious that today he is repeating word for word what the "Soyuz" group deputies—Deputies Kogan, Chekhoyev, Petrushenko—used to say constantly. He is repeating all this now that the game is virtually over.

Everything that is happening today is sad. There was an opportunity to halt the process of disintegration of the state, but nothing was done, things were allowed to take their course, and now tears are being shed—oh, how bad things have become for us all, and yet it was clear from the outset that this was what would happen, and the "Soyuz" group warned of the consequences. On 18 November 1988 the Estonian Supreme Soviet was the first to adopt a declaration of sovereignty. If Gorbachev had at that time not contented himself with a mere formal decree revoking it, but had really taken all constitutional steps to prevent the reinforcement of centrifugal trends, many things would have turned out differently. But he was nonchalant about it: Never mind, he said, let them say what they like. And now all these vacillations, this lack of principle, have led to the destruction of the Union.

[Garifullina] It is already emerging from the initial assessments of today's situation by foreign politicians and the world press that after the blow struck by the three leaders, the Soviet Union will never be able to stay a unified state. Is it really the end?

[Alksnis] The economy of the Union state cannot tolerate outrages against it. Their attempts to destroy the political structures of the unified state will affect the economy. And when today Kyrgyzstan finds itself without fuel, Moscow without food, Yerevan without gas, and Khabarovsk without heating, the main reason for this universal disaster is the disintegration of the state. I am frankly astonished at the naivety of the local leaders, who mislead us in the hope that they will manage to get a grip on the situation. They will not succeed: The economy will not let them, nor will the people, who will be the first victims of the coming chaos and excesses.

And whey people nowadays say "the former Soviet Union," I do not accept that. These so-called politicians would like to bury the Union. But it is still alive! Our people are still alive, tens, hundreds of millions of people are united by the concept of the "Soviet people," and it is not as easy as all that to erase this from their hearts.

[Garifullina] Nonetheless, the process of disintegration is a painful reality. Now Ukraine has voted for independence...

[Alksnis] That is just another passing phase! Remember: Six months ago Ukraine came out in favor of the Union, and now it is against.

[Garifullina] What is the reason for this?

[Alksnis] Given intensive indoctrination of public opinion by the mass media, you can push any idea through. Unfortunately, people believe what is said on television and in the newspapers. In Ukraine, in effect, no opposing ideas were declared, and the other viewpoint—in favor of the Union—was unable to get into the press.

There are also purely mundane factors. The food situation in Ukraine today is slightly better than in Russia. People are frightened at what is happening here, and maybe they think that by fencing themselves in, within an independent Ukraine, they will be able to maintain stability with food supplies.

But I am also convinced that this is a mighty blow against the Russian democrats. The fact that the Russian population of Ukraine voted for an independent Ukraine is clearly indicative of the attitude to the present leadership. People voted for independence in order to protect themselves. This is a serious matter. It is the final warning bell for Yeltsin.

[Garifullina] All the same, the idea of a Union treaty is not dead yet. Gorbachev has said that all the possibilities are not yet exhausted.

[Alksnis] Attempts to resurrect the idea of a Union treaty are pointless and useless. It is hardly likely to be signed, or if it is signed, it will be something nobody wants. And it will not be fulfilled, any more than the economic agreements already signed are being fulfilled. The actual content of the treaty on the USS [Union of Sovereign States] is not relevant to the real state of affairs. It

enshrines the ambitions of republic leaders who are not very interested in ordinary people's problems...

But I think the people are tired of waiting, and I do not envy those petty princelings who, by the whim of fate, are at the summit of power today.

[Garifullina] You said that although everyone is talking about the former Union, you still believe the Union will live on.

[Alksnis] For sure!

[Garifullina] What is your faith based on?

[Alksnis] Remember history. Our state could have broken up into pieces in 1917 too. The situation was similar in many ways: You had an independent Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Transcaucasian Republic... So we have seen all this before. But the two factors that unite us today were not present then: the single economic area, the single economy; and there was no such thing as the Soviet people.

Today 75 million people, that is, virtually one-third of the country, live outside their own national state formations, they are the first to suffer from the state's disintegration, and therefore they are most actively in favor of the Union. The 17 March referendum showed the mood of the entire population. And again, I want to repeat: The vote for independence by the population of Ukraine proves nothing. Let us see what the Ukrainians will say next spring, what they will think then about the idea of an independent Ukraine. The economy will sort everything out, and it will be the best medicine.

Unfortunately, not all the democrats and democratically minded Muscovites have lost their illusions. In January they were standing in Manege Square and chanting: "Freedom for Lithuania, freedom for the Baltic," without understanding what is happening there—today they are standing in waiting lines for two hours at a time. Ukraine has proclaimed its independence—and now they will be standing in line for eight hours!

[Garifullina] But the democrats were motivated, they say, by the idea of solidarity, they were supporting the national liberation struggle in the Union republics.

[Alksnis] Very interesting things are happening now: Those who came out against the state and were its most active destroyers are today in a hurry to change their spots.

[Garifullina] In the spring it was "Democratic Russia"—at rallies, in the press, everywhere—that was calling for a "no" to the Union in the referendum...

[Alksnis] That is why I want to warn people, so that they can find out who is who and not be deceived again. First they changed from communists into democrats, now they are changing from democrats into statesmen. I want people to understand: When politicians change their convictions depending on the weather, they are leading the country and people into ruin.

[Garifullina] What is the situation in independent Latvia today?

[Alksnis] The situation is complex. People are demoralized—both Latvians and Russians—although there is euphoria too. An eloquent detail: On 18 November the anniversary of the proclamation of the Latvian Republic in 1917 was celebrated, but the mood was not very festive. There were no great rallies of thousands of people, although there were calls for people to take to the streets. People thought: What have we achieved? In short, what we were fighting for is what we are up against now. Life is getting worse. The Russian-speaking population has found itself in the most difficult position.

[Garifullina] But the other day Yeltsin and Gorbunovs signed an economic agreement and communique on behalf of the two states...

[Alksnis] The present leadership of Russia has betrayed—I emphasize this—its own compatriots, who found themselves, one fine day, outside their own homeland. Illustrations? Plenty! In Latvia, as you know, the concept of citizenship of the Latvian Republic has been adopted. This is the concept of apartheid. About a million of Latvia's 2.7 million inhabitants, that is, more than one-third of the entire population, are not entitled to citizenship.

[Garifullina] What does this mean in real life?

[Alksnis] A great many laws have already been adopted in which the term "citizen of the Latvian Republic" figures. A noncitizen of the Latvian Republic is not entitled to land—he will have to hand over his dacha plot if he had one. There are restrictions on entrepreneurship and shareholding. Political activity by noncitizens is ruled out entirely. That means that the concept puts people in the position of second-class citizens.

The executive director of the Helsinki Oversight Committee sent the chairman of the Latvian Republic Supreme Council a letter containing a demand for the draft law on citizenship not to be adopted, deeming it unfair and discriminatory and contrary to CSCE documents, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international documents. Can you imagine? The West sounds the alarm, but Russia is silent. The democrats pretend nothing is happening. And then they take offense when they are accused of betraying Russia's interests.

[Garifullina] Apparently the treaty between Latvia and Russia will dot all the i's and cross all the t's.

[Alksnis] Fine, about the treaty. Today Russia, geopolitically speaking, has been put back hundreds of years, it has lost its access to the Baltic Sea—after all, the port of Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, will not solve its problems. it has in effect lost three-fourths of its freight flow,

which used to go through the ports in the Baltic republics. And Boris Nikolayevich's endorsement of those republics' independence lies behind this.

[Garifullina] So the independence of the "Baltic countries" should not have been recognized?

[Alksnis] If Boris Nikolayevich had first held talks with Latvia, secured observance of the rights of citizens, even Russian citizens, and consideration for Russia's economic interests, and after that had recognized Latvia's independence, I would say: Yes, he is a sound politician. But when everything is signed in a hurry and then it turns out that the signature on the decree recognizing the independence of the Latvian Republic is going to cost Russia hundreds of billions of dollars, I ask: Who will pay? Today Lithuania is asking billions of dollars for the use of Klaipeda port. I doubt whether the politicians who are now in power are going to pay for it. The Russians will have to pay, and they could find plenty of other uses for those billions.

I am ashamed for the Russia that hands over Sergey Parfenov and Erich Honecker and is prepared to sell the Kurils, age-old Russian lands. It is sad that under pressure of circumstances Russia's interests are being betrayed everywhere and in everything.

[Garifullina] You defend the country's unity ardently and I would say fiercely. What does the Soviet Union mean to you, a Latvian?

[Alksnis] The Soviet Union is Russia, but not what is nowadays called the "RSFSR". For me Russia is much more than that, and the fact that I am a Latvian is of no importance. Remember, Catherine II, under whom Russia had its golden age, was a pure-blooded German, but she did more for Russia than many pure-blooded Russians. Our country has always been unique. And it cannot be denied that over a period of hundreds of years, together we built a vast state and lived in peace and concord. And there was no bloodshed, as there is now in practically every corner of the country. It was not like that!

[Garifullina] Do you believe the rebirth of the Union is inevitable? When will it begin?

[Alksnis] There is at the moment no real political force capable of coming out in its defense, but I think in the spring the mood in society will be different.

[Garifullina] And that is why you and Aleksandr Nevzorov have set up the "Nashi" ["Our Boys"] movement?

[Alksnis] Yes. The movement's main base is in St. Petersburg, we have fairly large-scale support among people of various convictions—monarchists, "Democratic Russia" members, Communists. There are a great many young people. I was pleased at that. It was the first time I had seen such ardent support for the patriotic idea among young people. This is very important.

We have set a goal: constant victories, so that people can see that this is a real force that is achieving something. Thanks to the work done by the "Nashi" movement and thanks to the support from other regions, including Moscow, and including the support of SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, we have succeeded in ensuring that "600 Seconds" is back on the air and Aleksandr Nevzorov has the opportunity to bring those 10 minutes of truth to the viewers.

[Garifullina] How does one become a member of your movement?

[Alksnis] We don't have membership. If you support us you are "Nashi," if you are for the Union you are "Nashi." Obviously we will be setting up structures, in Moscow and elsewhere, and there will be coordinators of some kind. But in the meantime support committees are needed in the collectives. Our operating methods are strictly peaceful. We advocate only the constitutional way of solving problems, we will operate by parliamentary methods—through the deputies who support us. We will also make active use of nonparliamentary methods—the so-called rally democracy.

[Garifullina] You have chosen for your anthem a famous song, one of the people's favorite songs, from the Great Patriotic War. Why?

[Alksnis] The Soviet Union can be saved by the whole people, the whole country, and therefore we say: "Arise, Vast Country...!"

Situation After Minsk Accords Reviewed

PM1212130791 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 11 Dec 91 p 1

[Viktor Shirokov "Commentary of the Day": "Once Again Faced With a Choice: Should We Throw Our Support Solidly Behind the Union of Sovereign States, Give Preference to the Commonwealth of Independent States, or Return to the USSR? Meanwhile the Forest Is Getting Thicker and Thicker..."]

[Text] The past two or three days have confronted us with a puzzle: Who is right? Is it the leaders of the three republics—Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia, who solemnly introduced themselves in the Belovezhskaya Forest as the "High Contracting Parties" and declared that the USSR has ceased to exist? Or is it the USSR president in his statement addressed directly to the people and containing different arguments?

We dealt with the agreements and the statements of the "three" in the previous edition of this newspaper. They regard the Commonwealth of Independent States as a fait accompli. It must be noted that M. Gorbachev's statement which was made a several hours after his talks with N. Nazarbayev and B. Yeltsin, who was simultaneously representing the interests of Ukraine and

Belarus, did not reject out of hand all the postulates of the "Belovezhskaya" documents. He also noted their "positive features."

M. Gorbachev counts on the "plus" side the attendance at the Belarussian meeting of the Ukrainian leader, who had previously all but ignored the Novo-Ogarevo treaty process. It is also a good thing that the agreement on the newly emerged Commonwealth of Independent States does not ignore the need to create a single economic area and a common currency and financial and banking system. Apart from cooperation in the sphere of science, education, culture, and so forth, "a certain formula for collaboration in the military-strategic sphere is proposed." (Oh, these vague political formulations, concealing the thorns of veiled mistrust...).

And nonetheless the president of the USSR (which as far as he is concerned, clearly still exists beyond any doubt) assessing the Belarussian documents attaches paramount importance to criteria which are clearly meant to call into question the very emergence of these documents. One of these criteria is most important. Talking about the USSR ceasing to exist, M. Gorbachev rightly emphasizes: "Unquestionably, every republic has the right to secede from the Union, but the fate of a multinational state cannot be determined by the will of three republics' leaders. This question can be resolved only by constitutional means with the participation of all sovereign states, taking into account the will of their peoples."

It is clear that the president is relying here on the results of the March nationwide referendum which are currently being modified to suit the short-term political considerations of the moment. It is wrong and dangerous, M. Gorbachev says further, to declare that unionwide legal norms have ceased to exist, as this can only exacerbate the chaos and anarchy in society. Here he clearly also had in mind the abolition of all union organs which are still functioning even if only somehow. It is true that the "rashness" of the Belorussian meeting's documents which totaly negate the present center may lead to total bedlam during the "transitional period," if there is no clearly coordinated and balanced single leadership. A country without power is no country.

The president is also pained by the fact that the "Belarussian summit," that is to say the meeting, adopted "fateful" decisions at short notice and in private, without submitting them for discussion by the Supreme Soviets of the republics and the peoples who inhabit them, and at a time when the supreme organs of sovereign states were discussing the draft treaty on the Union of Sovereign States—his difficult brainchild.

M. Gorbachev proposed in conclusion that the Supreme Soviets of the republics and the USSR Supreme Soviet discuss—as alternative solutions—both the Novo-Ogarevo draft and the agreement signed in Belarus. Well, in my opinion, this sort of "competition" is entirely possible and even necessary. When the people's deputies have subjected both documents to the "acid test" so to speak, both their advantages and their shortcomings will be come more obvious. And, finally, the USSR president captured an idea which has currently been floating around in society, and proposed that the Congress of USSR People's Deputies be convened since the Belovezhskaya agreement implies a totaly different "formula of statehood" than that which is enshrined in the currently valid Constitution. Nor did he rule out the holding of a nationwide referendum (plebiscite) on this issue.

As for the latter, there is nothing to argue about—the fate of the country and its statehood must be decided by the people themselves. However, it is sad that politicians organize and hold referendums when it suits them, that they rely on their results in clashes with their political opponents, and forget about these measures when, in their opinion, it is no longer essential to take the people's will into account. Might this not also happen on this occasion?

And so we are again faced with a choice. Should we throw our support solidly behind the Union of Sovereign States, or give preference to the Commonwealth of Independent States? Or perhaps we should also remember the USSR? I do not know, I do not know. Let's think it over...

Nazarbayev Expected To Come to Belovezhskaya

PM1212112991 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 10 Dec 91 p 1

[Report by O. Yegorova under the general heading: "I Woke Up and Hey Presto! No Soviet Power..."]

[Text] Minsk—The documents attesting to the end of the USSR's existence were signed in Viskuli—in N.S. Khrushchev's magnificent residence, or, to put it in plain terms, in his former dacha in the frozen, snow-covered Belovezhskaya Forest. Nikita Sergeyevich sometimes went there for just one purpose—to take part in the sport of kings...

The announcement that talks would take place at the secret dacha in this game reserve caught observers unawares. Who knows, maybe the leaders of the three republics had gone there merely to hunt? At any rate, journalists were practically not granted access to Viskuli.

But this time there were no hunts in the forest. There was work. Complex, dramatic work.

The agreement documents were drafted and prepared fairly quickly—during the day on Sunday. And at 1417 Moscow time "a table was brought into the hall," so to speak, so the documents could be signed...

But then something unforeseen happened. Journalists had already been told that a long-awaited and important event had "occurred," but then communications with Viskuli were severed... One hour, two, three... Five hours

passed... What had happened in the midst of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha? There was just one answer: Wait and see.

As we later discovered, this long pause was caused by the fact that the three heads of state had approached Kazakh President N. Nazarbayev and, to all appearances, expected him to arrive. They even traveled to meet him at the military airfield. But he was held up en route in Moscow, allegedly to refuel the plane—that is the rumored version—and did not get to Brest. That is apparently why the news from Viskuli was late and "made it" only just in time for the "Vremya" program.

The republic leaders did not give a press conference on the results of the Brest meeting. Yeltsin flew to Moscow: He was officially tasked with reporting to Gorbachev on behalf of the three republics. And Shushkevich and Kebich stayed in the Pushcha until noon yesterday.

Churkin Interviewed on Ministry Stand

OW1212031991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2043 GMT 11 Dec 91

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature based on reports by diplomatic correspondents Mikhail Mayorov and Igor Porshnev; transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] "As long as we have a USSR President and Union structures, we'll keep working," the head of the Information Department of the USSR Foreign Ministry, Vitaliy Churkin, said in the course of an exclusive interview given to DP [Diplomatic Panorama]. The Foreign Ministry, he said, was still carrying out its duties in spite of the critical situation in the country. According to Mr Churkin, the need for this was pointed out by Eduard Shevardnadze at a short conference of senior Foreign Ministry officials on December 10.

Mr Churkin said that a few days ago agreements with Poland and Finland were initialled.

"So while politicians are taking their decisions," he summed up, "the Foreign Ministry is doing its usual work."

He cited the opinion of lawyers working in the ministry to the effect that the statement made by the leaders of the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia did not provide an edequate basis for the abolition of the Soviet Union and the "outlawing" of its structures. He offered a hypothetical example: supposing the governors of California, Texas and New York, the three largest states in America, declared that the USA no longer existed. Although, he said, this was not a merely hypothetical example, for this kind of thing actually did take place in the USA in the last century, leading to a civil war.

"Bearing in mind the grave situation in this country," Mr Churkin said, "we should avoid any further aggravations." It is all the more important, therefore, that a law-based solution is found.

He thought the Russian leaders had recently abandoned some of their "rigid attitudes". The statements made by Gennadiy Burbulis, Russia's State Secretary and First Vice-Premier, at a press conference on December 10 were quite remarkable in this sense. Mr Churkin pointed to Mr Burbulis' interpretation of the clause in the Brest agreement on the abolition of Union structures on the territory of the signatory states as a process rather than a single act.

Asked about sentiments among Soviet diplomats, Mr Churkin said that all citizens of the country, naturally including the diplomats as well, need certainty. Expressing his personal point of view, he emphasized the need "to resolve today's predicament on a sound legal basis and as soon as possible".

"I am convinced that if we resort to revolutionary methods we'll have another edition of 1917. It seems the leaders of the three republics are beginning to realize this," Mr Churkin said.

The "Yugoslav Version"

Speaking at the above-mentioned press conference on December 10, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Andrey Kozyrev, emphasized that "the Brest agreements signed by the leaders of Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus are the last opportunity to avert here what is happening in Yugoslavia".

Events in Yugoslavia and the USSR do have a lot in commor, in the opinion of a senior official at the USSR Foreign Ministry who specializes in Yugoslavia (he did not want his name to be mentioned). In the interview he gave a DP correspondent he said the pattern of the developments in Yugoslavia and the USSR and the logic behind them were very similar.

At the same time he thought there were serious differences too. In particular, one has to take into account the size of the Soviet Union, the nuclear weapons on its territory and a whole series of other essential factors, which means if events similar to those taking place in Yugoslavia were to happen in the Soviet Union they would have far more tragic consequences.

Nevertheless the diplomat believed there was a chance to prevent them of which maximum use should be made.

Possibility of Muslim Commonwealth Envisioned

LD1112214591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Commentary by I.Ye. Malashenko; from the "TV Inform" Newscast]

[Text] Newspapers, radio, and television abroad have today been very busy today discussing the question of USSR President Gorbachev's resignation. Many people think this issue is already settled and it is just a matter of a few days.

This topic concerns us, too, but I think that events in our country have already gone far beyond the question of the personal fate of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. The leaders of the Central Asian sovereign republics and the president of Kazakhstan will meet in Ashkhabad tomorrow. Few people doubt that this meeting is a reaction to the statement by the leaders of the three Slavic republics on the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States. We do not know if the participants of the Ashkhabad meeting will want to join Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, or if they will prefer to set up another commonwealth, which many people would view as a Muslim commonwealth.

It seems to me that it is the task of the political leaders not to permit such a split. Can Mikhail Gorbachev help them solve this task? The Union of which he was elected president no longer exists. Nevertheless, the former Union remains a nuclear superpower. There are nuclear weapons located in the territory of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, and for a transitional period they could conclude a military-strategic alliance and entrust control over the nuclear arsenal to President Gorbachev, the supreme commander-in- chief. Kazakhstan would thereby be joined to some extent to the three Slavic republics and a bridge would be built between the two parts of our country. This means that President Gorbachev could help in the emergence of a commonwealth that would include not only the Slavic republics but also a state that is being referred to more and more frequently as a Muslim one. This means that the threat about which I was speaking about would be averted.

I would like to remind you that a seat in the UN Security Council belongs to the former Soviet Union. We do not want to lose it. It might be in our interests for Mikhail Gorbachev to represent us all at the UN during the transitional period. It might be worth mentioning his role in relation to the West, without whose assistance it will be difficult for us to extricate ourselves from this crisis.

I think that Mikhail Gorbachev is ready to resign. He might do so, but I am not convinced that he will thereby resign from political life.

Dispute Portrayed as 'Loud Political Scandal'

PM1212152791 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 12 Dec 91 Union Edition p 6

[Report by V. Belykh: "Lights Gone Out in PRAVDA's Street"]

[Text] "Yesterday we ended up here like Gorbachev at Foros—without lights or communications, just waiting for the State Committee for the State of Emergency."

With these words PRAVDA Deputy Chief Editor Vladimir Gubarev opened a news conference devoted to the events that have unfolded around the newspaper. It all began when editorial office staffers arriving for work 10 December discovered that electricity and the telephones had been cut off on three floors. The reason was the passions that have flared over PRAVDA's premises and the dispute as to who owns them—the PRAVDA Editorial Board or the former "PRAVDA" Publishing House of the former CPSU Central Committee, which is now the "Pressa" Russian State Publishing House belonging to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Ministry of Information.

Thus, PRAVDA was recently ordered to give up two and a half floors to ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA. It refused. According to Vyacheslav Leontyev, director of the publishing house, he inspected the disputed premises and discovered that some commercial organization, which has nothing to do with newspapers, had already moved in. It was then that the order to cut off power and communications was issued.

Incidentally, the news conference itself turned into a long and heated argument between representatives of the editorial board and the publishing house. With counter-accusations, an enumeration of debts to each other, and caustic remarks.

But it is also the truth that people at PRAVDA itself are trying to portray an ordinary property dispute as a loud political scandal.

Economic Management Committee Meets Experts

LD1112224991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1522 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow, 11 Dec (TASS)—The extremely grave situation regarding foreign exchange was once again cited today, as the Committee for Operational Management of the National Economy met to discuss how to pay for December's imports.

It is more or less a repeat of the situation in November: Export revenues are barely enough to cover servicing of the USSR's foreign debt and other urgent payments. During the sitting it was reported that export earnings for December are expected to be about 900 million rubles' worth of hard currency at the official rate of exchange. For comparison, export earnings for last December came to 2,200 million rubles.

A number of reasons were given for the drop in export revenues, not least of them the fact that enterprises are now entitled to trade their products abroad. The meeting concentrated on how to pay for freight vessels to transport, above all, foodstuffs bought by the USSR with credits issued to it. For this, about another 48 million rubles (in hard-currency equivalent at the official exchange rate) has to be found in December, or, as was stated at the meeting, the country will be on the brink of famine.

Experts attending the meeting suggested several ways of replenishing the Union-Republican foreign-exchange fund in December this year. One suggestion was to ask some of the country's enterprises, organizations and commercial banks that possess hard currency for high-interest loans. A representative of the USSR State Bank stressed that, strange as it may seem, neither commercial nor republican central banks have yet submitted official accounts of their hard-currency revenues. According to existing estimates, the monthly incomes of enterprises currently selling their products abroad come to a nation-wide total of nearly 1,000 million dollars. Also, there are still no real obstacles to stop them from transferring their foreign currency into numerous foreign banks and funds.

Those at the meeting agreed to a proposal by Ivan Silayev, chairman of the Interstate Economic Committee, to instruct, within one day, experts to assess ways of raising money for the Union-Republican foreign-exchange fund, with a final decision to be made tomorrow. This decision might be submitted for final approval to the Council of Heads of Government of the Economic Community Member-States, which could be held on December 16-17 in either Moscow or Minsk. According to Silayev, a final choice of venue for the Council of Heads of Government has yet to be made.

Negative Effects on Demographic Processes Cited

OW1112071791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1958 GMT 10 Dec 91

["Cover Story" from the "Soviet Business Report" feature: "Analysis of the Labor Market in 1991"; transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The deteriorating economic situation, political instability, and the disintegration of a unified state and economic ties have had negative effects on the former Soviet Union's demographic processes—experts from the center Macroecon report. This year the population has grown by 1.4 mn [million] people, which represents a growth rate of only 0.5%, down from 0.9% in 1986- 89. The birthrate and the population's mortality rate have also demonstrated negative tendencies.

MAIN DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS (ENTIRE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER USSR)

Indicators per 1000 people	1986	1989	1990	1991
Birthrate	20.0	17.6	16.8	16.6
Mortality rate	9.8	10.0	10.3	10.7
Natural growth	10.2	7.6	6.5	5.9

Demographic conditions in the European republics are the most favorable in the country. The population is shrinking in Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine and Belarus. The Central Asian republics' and Azerbaijan's populations are growing, and they now represent 20% of the former Soviet Union's total population.

INTRA-UNION MIGRATION

In the last few years, the direction of internal migration has been reversed. Traditionally, a stream of settlers, encouraged by the state, migrated from the USSR's European territories to the East, especially to Siberia and the Far East. Since 1989, migrants have travelled from east to west. An analogous turnaround is characteristic of the traditional resettlement from north to south; migrants are now moving north.

Macroecon experts identify disparate reasons for the east-west and north-south reversals. In the east-west case, economic factors, for the most part, have contributed to change. Unrestricted wage growth and inflation have weakened the incentive to move east, where wages were traditionally higher, but living conditions were worse. In the north-south case, political factors such as nationalism and instability have played the decisive role. In 1991, the total number of forced migrants (refugees) reached 800,000.

FOREIGN MIGRATION

In the first six months of 1991, 240,000 citizens of the former USSR received permission to emigrate and become permanent residents of a foreign country. Macroecon estimates that another 300,000 may leave the country in the second half of the year. Sociological polls indicate that 20% of all specialists and 50% of all college graduates would like to work abroad.

EMPLOYMENT

The economic slowdown and significant inter-regional and inter-industrial structural displacements will lower demand for workers in the production and service industries. All types of unemployment are cropping up in the former USSR—structural, frictional and cyclical.

Macroecon experts note that enterprises still do not face hard budget constraints. Until they do, the process of disengagement will be cushioned, and much unemployment will remain hidden. Financial stabilization measures to be implemented in 1992 call for the removal of state subsidies to enterprises. This step may cause hidden unemployment to assume an open form. With the reduction of hidden unemployment, 10 to 25 mn people could end up jobless. This would mean an unemployment rate of approximately 6-15% of the working population.

PAYMENT OF LABOR

In 1991, enterprises and organizations paid their workers approximately 72% more; however, given the system of government transfer payments, an average worker's income increased by 90%. Thus, wages decreased as a share of total income. The government transfer payments reduce the incentive to raise labor productivity. If we consider the fact that the consumer price index skyrocketed by 200% during this period, workers' real income slipped by 5-15%. State transfer

payments to pensioners, students, and the handicapped kept pace with inflation and guaranteed these people a stable real income. This fact also weakens incentives for people who work in the public sector.

Security Service, Armenia Sign Agreement

LD1112182791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1744 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow, 11 Dec (TASS)—Vadim Bakatin, head of the Interrepublican Security Service, and Usik Arutyunyan, head of the State Directorate for the National Security of the Republic of Armenia, have signed an agreement on relations between the Interrepublican Security Service and the State Directorate for the National Security of Armenia. The agreement expresses their intention to cooperate in protecting the vitally important interests of Armenia and the Union and in strengthening international security. It was deemed expedient that the Interrepublican Security Service will retain its role as the organizer and the coordinator within the limits of its powers determined by the agreement.

TASS Carries Press Review for 12 Dec

LD1212092991 Moscow TASS in English 0633 GMT 12 Dec 91

["Soviet Press Review"—TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow December 12 TASS—Today's newspapers continue to comment on the decision of the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus to create a Slavic union.

The RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA newspaper publishes the article "There Is No Union, There Is a Commonwealth," in which leaders of the Democratic Party of Russia criticise the move, saying the presidents were not authorised to "abolish" the Soviet Union, and stress the need for the earliest possible signing of the Union treaty.

The Soviet trade union daily TRUD said "in this situation, the formula of commonwealth is possible as one of the means to preserve the union".

The newspaper PRAVDA publishes an interview with Tajikistan President Rakhman Nabiyev.

Commenting on the results of the meeting of the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus outside Brest last Sunday [December 8], Nabiyev stressed "the union should be preserved".

The NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA newspaper (INDEPENDENT GAZETTE) carries excerpts from a conversation between Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and newspaper editor-in-chief Viktor Tretyakov.

Gorbachev said he would respect "the legitimate choice of representative bodies and the people".

The full text of the interview will be published on Saturday [14 December].

The SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA newspaper stresses that the decision to create a commonwealth of independent states may become a "starting-point for building a new union".

The Soviet military daily KRASNAYA ZVEZDA frontpages an article about the future of the army in light of the meeting of the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

The newspaper stressed the Armed Forces are facing a tough choice and their future remains obscure.

SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA publishes the article "Darkness Before Dawn" by Eduard Volodin, in which he said the creation of the Slavic union "means yet another stage of the national catastrophe".

In an interview with TRUD, Moscow Mayor Gavriil Popov speaks about democratic reforms in the country and Moscow.

The article "The Logic of Partnership" by economist Vladimir Kulik is devoted to the state of and prospects for Sino-Soviet economic relations.

Economic

National Income Falls by 'Unprecedented' Figure

OW1212001991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1700 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The national income over the past 11 months has fallen by an unprecedented figure (compared to last year)—13.5%. According to the research centre Macroecon, basing its analysis on the key performances over January-November period of this year, we have a dangerously snowballing stag-flation: falling physical volumes of production with galloping prices for practically all kinds of goods and services.

The fall of production in constant prices compared to the similar period of 1990 is 11.3%. In January this year the rate of recession was 4.3%.

The oil and condensed gas and coal production is down 10% on the first months of last year. The coaking coal production has fallen by 20%. Energy output is down 2%, that of rolled steel—by 13%.

The purchase of cereals as of December has amounted to 60% of last year's figure—32% for buckweat, 13% for rice. Meat production has shrunk by 11% in 11 months, milk—by 10%, eggs—by 3%.

Macroecon experts point to the declining share of the Soviet Union in world economic links: foreign trade has

decreased by 36.4% to ruble 136.7 billion turnover (exports down 30.7%, imports—down 41.7%).

Compared to last year, exports of crude oil have fallen in the 11 months by 51%, gas—by 3%, coal—by 60%. Oil products have also suffered—down by 17%, electric power—by 47%, pig iron—by 49%, pulp—by 46%.

Food imports have fallen fast: Poultry down on last year's 11 months by 58%, butter—33%, citrus fruit—45%. The pharmaceutical imports are down by 51%.

Fuel Shortage Forces Cancellation of Flights

LD1212102791 Moscow TASS in English 1013 GMT 12 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Lev Grunau]

[Text] Moscow December 12 TASS—Most Soviet airports are closed on Thursday [12 December] due to a dramatic lack of fuel forcing Aeroflot to cancel most flights throughout the country.

92 airports are closed, more than half of the total, and another 38 airports are on the brink of closure. There are currently no planes to service routes from Ukraine, the Caucasus, the Far East, and Kazakhstan, TASS learned today in the Aeroflot central dispatcher service.

No information is yet available as to when any form of normal services can be resumed.

Poll Provides Savings Rates for Populace

OW0912081891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0733 GMT 9 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] According to a VCIOM poll, 34% of the country's population had up to 3000 rubles in their savings bank accounts.

34% did not have any such account.

13% had from 500 to 1000 rubles.

One in ten had less than 500 rubles.

8% had from 3000 to 5000 rubles.

6% had from 5000 to 10,000 rubles saved in an account.

12% did not answer the question.

3004 people in a representative selection from around the country replied, the "Data" agency claims.

Margin of error is 3%.

Military

Gorbachev, Yeltsin Ministry Visits Detailed

Conference Described

PM1112180991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 12 Dec 91 Union Edition p 1

[Report by V. Litovkin under the general heading "M. Gorbachev and B. Yeltsin Seek a Common Language With the Military": "The Supreme Commander in Chief Meets with the Armed Forces Leadership"]

[Text] A conference of the Armed Forces leadership personnel was held 10 December at the USSR Ministry of Defense.

The military is asserting that such conferences are traditional; they are held at the end of every year, and the results of the fulfillments of combat training plans are summed up. The ministers; deputies; commanders in chief of branches of the Armed Forces; commanders of categories of troops, groups, districts, fleets, and formations; and commanders of combined units usually participate in these.

A special feature of the present conference, which was was conducted by Marshal of Aviation Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, USSR minister of defense, was the fact that for the first time in history ministers of defense, chairman of defense committees, and parliamentarians from certain sovereign republics participated in it, and naturally the fact of the presence of and address by USSR President M. Gorbachev, supreme commander in chief of the Armed Forces.

The first time he was present at such a function was in the summer of 1985, following the large-scale tactical exercises in Belarus, the statements adopted there, there was special interest in his address to the officers and generals.

Alas, journalists were not allowed into the conference hall. As your IZVESTIYA correspondent learned, the president described in his speech the current situation in the country, and said that the radical reforms going on in it are an objective necessity, as is the resolute transformation of the Armed Forces. The implementation of these reforms is uneven and is meeting opposition from people who are speculating on the difficulties being experienced and are trying to pursue a separatist and destabilizing course.

Disintegration has acquired particularly dangerous characteristics, the president said, recalling his statement on the agreement adopted in Belovezhskaya Forest. However, the Novo-Ogarevo process provides a good chance to get out of the crisis. We must preserve the Union, Gorbachev said. Our responsibility to the thousands of years of the past and the future requires this of us. Speaking about the statement of the leaders of the three independent republics, the president stressed: We do not

need confrontation; our task is to consolidate forces, take everything positive that is contained in the draft Treaty on the Union of Sovereign States and the three leaders' statement, discuss them in the republic Supreme Soviets, and arrive at a legal decision by parliamentary means.

M. Gorbachev's address to the Armed Forces leadership lasted for around 50 minutes—from 1645 to 1735. Evidently the president did not have enough time to hear out the opinions of officers and generals on the situation in the country and the Army, and the problems worrying them.

Gorbachev Arrived 'Unexpectedly'

OW1212090591 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2100 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] A deputy chairman of the RSFSR State Committee for Defence, people's deputy of the USSR, Major-General Aleksandr Tsalko has revealed the details of Tuesday's [10 December] meeting President Gorbachev held at the USSR Defence Ministry.

General Tsalko said that in the afternoon President Gorbachev "unexpectedly" arrived to attend a conference on progress in military training, chaired by the Defence Minister, Marshal Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov

General Tsalko said that in the wake of the emergence of a community of independent states President Gorbachev said that the abolition of the unitarian state was fraught with the risk of the Union's utter decay. President Gorbachev said that he saw the Army as a factor for stability. However, he was not going to use it to settle political problems. At the same time General Tsalko said the president said he hoped that the officers, brought up in the spirit of the country's best traditions, would support the idea of a union of sovereign states.

'Significant Proportion' For Yeltsin

LD1112141691 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Commentary by NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA observer Vladimir Todrys; in the "Information and Analysis" program]

[Text] Both Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin are trying to gain support from the military. In a situation of paralysis of power and a decline in the prestige of parliament deputies, the military's views become especially important. This aim was pursued by two meetings. One took place on 10 December in the evening; the other on 11 December in the morning. Mikhail Gorbachev met the generals and high-ranking officers on 10 December. The generals and officers were assembled ostensibly to sum up the half-yearly results. It is a usual measure, but, traditionally, only district commanders and commanders of individual armies are called to attend. However, on 10 December, at Gorbachev's request, even divisional commanders were called to attend. The president of the Union told the military that the state was collapsing and repented the fact that so far he has failed to pay due attention to the problems of the Army. However, he was received coolly. Not overpopular among the military before, it now looks like Mikhail Sergeyevich evokes pretty little by way of warm feelings among the servicemen. He has come too late—this is how General Salko, Russia's deputy defense minister, explained it. It was expected of him earlier.

Yeltsin met the same audience early in the morning on 11 December. It took place at the Defense Ministry on the Arbatskaya Square. To begin with, Yeltsin, too, was met with caution. However, at the end of the day, he succeeded not only in gaining the sympathy, but also the support of a significant proportion of the generals' and officers' gathering.

The first reason is the national one. Most of the commanding officers of the Soviet Army are Slavs and the idea of a pan-Slavic Union is, subconsciously, more to their liking than Gorbachev's ideas. The second reason is that a treaty of sorts has already been signed, while mental inertia has, for the time being, failed to discern a difference between union and commonwealth, and joint command of a single strategic space—for it is thus formulated in the Minsk accords—is, for the time being, perceived as central command of the Armed Forces as a single entity. And Boris Yeltsin's cautious explanations were received in this spirit. Incidentally, he refuses to follow in Kravchuk's steps and declare himself commander-in-chief on the territory of his republic. One more reason why the military supports Yeltsin is that—as General Salko asserts—this joint command will, in any case, become another signboard for the Defense Ministry. This is because, in the conditions as they are today, to carry out genuine decentralization and restructuring of the command structure of the Armed Forces is so difficult as to be impossible in practical terms.

True, if this is the case, it makes the very idea of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] altogether ephemeral. The republics will hardly go for cooperation, if the CIS retains not merely a structure of the center, but an Army structure into the bargain. However, in any case, the events of yesterday evening and today morning evoke concern: Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Kravchuk alike are forcing the military to make a political choice. The Army's involvement in politics in a crisis situation rarely entails no repercussions.

Manilov on Yeltsin Meeting

LD1112165691 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1608 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Lieutenant General Manilov, chief of the Ministry of Defense Information Directorate, has commented on the results of today's meeting between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the top military leadership, at which journalists were not allowed. No division of the Armed Forces could be under discussion. The international

public should not worry. These words, pronounced at the meeting with Yeltsin, could be called the key words. Command of the Armed Forces, as well as control over individual components, including the strategic ones, has been and remains single. The Russian president answered all questions, including those connected with forming a military budget, Manilov said. Many ideas expressed today coincide with what was said yesterday at a meeting at the Defense Ministry in which USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev participated, the general stressed.

More on Yeltsin Address

PM1112205591 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 12 Dec 91 Union Edition p 1

[Report by V. Yuzbashev under the general heading "M. Gorbachev and B. Yeltsin Seek A Common Language with the Military": "The Russian President Guarantees Social Protection for the Army"]

[Text] B. Yeltsin's meeting with the Armed Forces leadership began unusually early in the Ministry of Defense building on Arbat Square—at 0800. The Russian president's schedule is so tight that he simply could not make any other time.

He asked that this conversation with the military should not be considered as some kind of assembly or conference but simply a meeting, a conversation. What did the RSFSR president speak about with the Army leadership? (Incidentally the summing up of the combat training results was completed in one day and many commanders of combined units and formations have already dispersed to their units.)

B. Yeltsin explained to officers and generals the reasons for the conclusion of the trilateral agreement between the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus on the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States. He said that this is a way out of an impasse, it will provide an opportunity to keep the situation in the country under control, and preserve and develop political, economic, cultural, and other ties, which have formed over a period of thousands of years between our peoples.

The commonwealth is open to any independent republics, it presupposes the promotion, toward its conclusion, of a treaty on a defense union and on collective security based on the unified command of the Armed Forces and the centralized control of nuclear and strategic potential. At the same time, any defense functions may be delegated to leaders of sovereign states and their ministries of defense and military formations.

The RSFSR president confirmed his position with respect to the republic's Armed Forces. Russia does not intend to form its own Army or its own Ministry of Defense unless it is forced to do so, he said. But if such a thing should happen, then it will make its own ground forces subordinate to a unified command. This must be preserved under all circumstances.

B. Yeltsin devoted a great deal of attention in his address to the Army's social position. Russia and its leadership keenly perceive and have a deep understanding of the difficult problems of people in uniform, he said, and are doing all they can to satisfy those people. The president confirmed his decision to provide pay for the officers through the Russian budget, and increase it by a factor of 1.9 as of the new year. He spoke of the program for the construction of housing for officers' families and their social protection, wherever the officers may be serving. He appealed for stability and calm to be preserved in the Army as a guarantee of the preservation of stability in the country.

The Russian president's speech lasted for around an hour, and he went on to answer questions from officers and generals for another half an hour.

At the end of the meeting, the participants told your IZVESTIYA correspondent that they very much liked their conversation with the Russian president because it was businesslike and constructive.

Yeltsin Stresses Military Role

OW1112214991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2031 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] As INTERFAX has been told at the USSR Defence Ministry's press centre, Boris Yeltsin described the present situation as rather difficult at his Wednesday [11 December] meeting with the command of the USSR Armed Forces, but said "we have to get over it". He stressed the important role to be played by the Armed Forces in these conditions. As Russia's President B. Yeltsin has always backed the Army and counted on "its stability".

In B. Yeltsin's opinion, it should be a single joint force, "all the more so where the strategic force is concerned." A single commandment of the strategic forces should be kept by all means. Russia, said the president, will not undertake setting up its own separate defence ministry. In his estimation, the decisions in Minsk did not entail a division of the Armed forces, so the world community can rest assured.

B. Yeltsin pledged Russia will care for the Armed Forces and foot the bill for their upkeep. He urged continued reform of the military.

Speaking of the newly set-up Commonwealth of Independent States, B. Yeltsin emphasized it was not a unitarian state, but a community of three states. A wish to join it has already been expressed by Kazakhstan, Moldova, Armenia, and some other republics, as IF [INTERFAX] has been informed at the press centre of the USSR Defence Ministry.

Air Force Chief Comments on Military Situation

AU1212112391 Hamburg DIE WELT in German 12 Dec 91 p 3

[Report by Ruediger Moniac: "All Commitments Regarding Germany Will Be Precisely Honored"]

[Text] The current visit to Germany by the commander in chief of the Soviet Air Force is taking place against the backdrop of insecurity at home. This is the right time to ask him questions about his power, the commitments that the Soviet Union has assumed, and about nuclear weapons. Petr Deynekin answered these questions. News had just reached Bonn that President Gorbachev's resignation was to be expected soon. The senior official, who was paying a visit to Air Force Inspector Lieutenant General Kuebart at his Bonn office, took note of the news with a rigid face. It seems as though nothing could really move him any more in this troubled period.

Colonel General Petr Stepanovich Deynekin, a Russian who was born near Rostow in December 1937, is commander in chief of the Soviet Air Force and at the same time deputy defense minister of the Soviet Union. In Kuebart's presence he was asked whether, in view of the news from Moscow, he is certain that he is still in control of an "intact Soviet Air Force." The Russian began his reply with a rhetorical ploy: "If one does not want to describe 20,000 Soviet pilots and 13,000 aircraft any longer as an Air Force, I would like to know what else I should describe as an Air Force." "There are no signs that the Air Force no longer obeys parliament, the Defense Ministry, or me as the commander in chief," he added calmly.

Does this also apply to the troop units in the Ukraine or Belarus? "Yes, 100 percent," Deynekin stressed.

The colonel general, who assumed office at the beginning of September, that is, after the coup against Gorbachev, and who can be considered a member of the new leadership in Moscow that has broken with communism once and for all, said the following about the "future Union" when praising cooperation between the Germans and the Soviets in eastern Germany: "Irrespective of what it will look like, what shape it might take, or whether it will come about at all, our commitments entered into with Germany, such as the troop withdrawal, and our international obligations, including the reduction of our Armed Forces, will be precisely honored." The Air Force, for example, for which he has been responsible for the past few months, now will be reduced by 70,000 men.

"In the old Soviet Union the Air Force and the aircraft industry were linked with each other. Is this still the case," Kuebart wanted to know. The Soviet commander in chief replied in the affirmative, adding: "At the moment I am the one who gives orders and pays for what the aircraft industry does on the orders of the Army." This branch of Soviet industry "has become so interwoven with the Air Force" that splitting it up and allocating it to different regions or republics "would endanger the existence of the Armed Forces."

Deynekin's first trip after assuming office was to the Ukraine, the "second most important region for the construction of aircraft." The Ukraine is the main supplier of transportation planes and engines of all kinds. In a working document "that has already been endorsed by the Council of Ministers of the Ukraine" new financing methods for the aircraft industry and for the "preservation of the Transportation Air Force and its further development" have been agreed between the Russian Federation and the Ukraine. Elaborating on these efforts, he pointed out: "To preserve the Soviet Air Force, we are trying to establish horizontal relations between the regions and republics. Irrespective of the political situation, it is my task to maintain a sensible level of the Soviet Armed Forces."

Deynekin was naturally also asked about nuclear weapons in his country and about their control. He confirmed that the "long-distance flying forces", the unit in which he advanced from the commander of Bear, Backfire and ultra modern Blackjack bombers to commander in chief, possess nuclear weapons within the framework of the nuclear "triad." They are deployed in the Russian Federation, but also in Belarus, the Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. "There is multiple control over the use of these weapons. In a final analysis, a joint decision must be made on the use of the weapons. A muddle-headed person cannot have sole control over the weapons. And to launch the weapons it is not enough for someone to press a button."

Asked whether he can guarantee the security of the nuclear weapons, he replied: "Yes, I guarantee control over the nuclear weapons at every level. I myself flew strategic nuclear carriers for 30 years, and I am quite familiar with this sphere. I am convinced that I enjoy authority among the major formations that are equipped with nuclear carriers."

When the next question was asked, the atmosphere relaxed visibly. How has cooperation between the 16th Soviet Air Force and the German Air Force developed in the new laender after German unification? Deynekin looked at Kuebart with an impish smile and asked whether he should reply or "Mr. Kuebart," who is three years older than him. The German made a friendly gesture of refusal. Deynekin is the visitor, he pointed out. The Russian mentioned that he has known Kuebart for only one and one-half days. However, he believes that within this short period they have come to understand each other very quickly. "We are in agreement that the two worst tragedies that happened during this century were the wars by the Germans against the Russians. General Kuebart's father was injured twice on the eastern front. My father, who was a pilot, was killed in 1943." For this reason, "we can say that we will do everything in our power to prevent such tragedies in the future," he stressed.

The news about German reunification was received with pleasure among "the entire Soviet people, but also among the Army and the Air Force," Deyneka pointed out. "The Germans should be aware that the Russians accommodated them on 3 October." Both officers agreed that cooperation between the two armed forces has developed well since that day. "The joint staff meets every day. Soviet air traffic has to be coordinated and numerous questions in connection with the deployment and the withdrawal have to be settled. So far, cooperation has been free of friction and based on trust," Kuebart emphasized.

Experts Comment on Nuclear Arsenal Security

LD1112170791 Moscow TASS in English 1622 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 11 TASS—The creation of a new commonwealth might make the Soviet nuclear arsenal more secure, military experts Vadim Makarenko and Dmitri Trenin told "THE NEW TIMES" weekly.

The Minsk agreement does not envisage a self-dissolution of the Armed Forces, it promotes only a change in the command structure, the experts claimed in today's issue of the weekly.

The Soviet president, as the commander of the Armed Forces, will be replaced by a coalition command of the three Slav republics. "One nuclear button will remain, but three fingers will be needed to press it", the experts said.

Makarenko and Trenin criticised the nuclear-free and neutrality principles of the Minsk agreement. "Neutrality of a certain republic is impossible in a commonwealth," they said.

The nuclear-free principle, evidently, means that the weapons will be gradually eliminated or withdrawn from the territories of the republics which do not want to have it, the experts explained. The latter variant means the Soviet nuclear arsenal will be deployed on Russian territory, they predicted.

The experts said this is a more civilised alternative which is likely to promote unity and preferable to the second alternative - to hand over control of nuclear arms to Russia.

Official Comments on 'Dangerous' Situation

LD1112213191 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1900 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Interview with Lieutenant General Leonid Grigoriyevich Ivashov, chief of the Administration Affairs Directorate of the USSR Defense Ministry, by correspondent Tatyana Chemodanova; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Chemodanova] Leonid Grigoriyevich, the situation concerning the Armed Forces, as far as we know, is taking on a dangerous nature.

[Ivashov] Yes indeed, the situation in and concerning the Armed Forces is today taking on an exceptionaly dangerous nature. Servicemen, workers, and staff of enterprises and institutions of the Defense Ministry as well as Army veterans are today alarmed about the fate of the Army and their own personal fate. Honestly giving of their energy, knowledge, and experience in the cause of defending the Union, they have now found themselves, thanks to the largely unthinking policy of the leadership of both the center and of a number of Union republics, in the position of being the odd- man-out in their own fatherland.

What is taking place around military camps in the Baltics and the Transcausus—the northern Caucasus—is rather reminiscent of what fascists once did on territory that they occupied. I am not afraid of making such comparisons, because servicemen and their families are now becoming the hostages of nationalists and political criminals. They are not being paid subsistence support. Electricity and heating are being switched off, and the opportunity to acquire essentials, including food, is being obstructed. In some garrisons children are not attending school now and, worst of all, is the murder of people.

Indeed, this year alone in the Transcaucasus there have been 95 bombardments, assaults, and attacks on military facilities as a result of which 16 people have died and 22 servicemen have been injured.

Certain forces are especially kindling this antagonism toward the Army, and, evidently some political groupings, extremist groupings, are simply thirsting for blood. But I want to stress that the patience of servicemen is not endless. They are people of honor and duty and will stand up for their honor ably, no matter how much they have been humiliated in recent years.

Without a doubt, all these actions will be undertaken within the framework of existing legislation. The situation in troop collectives is such that one spark is enough to cause an explosion. Servicemen will not reconcile themselves to being deprived of rights and humiliated. I would suggest that those engaged in politicking take this into account.

All matters, including matters relating to the Armed Forces, should be resolved by civilized methods. I would like to say the following: it has come about, historically, that groups of troops built military facilities in a nonuniform manner throughout the territories of the republics, based on military-strategic expedience. The main efforts were concentrated on covering the borders and opposing a probable foe with the most powerful groupings.

All strategic systems, such as anti-aircraft, anti-missile defense and guidance, and the intelligence system, are common ones, and breaking one of the links is capable of

paralyzing the work of the entire system. Therefore, such an unthinking annexation of any particular part of the Armed Forces not only weakens the defense and security of each republic, but introduces in relations between them, an additional tension on matters of joint military property.

Each republic is, after all, within its rights to make claims on receiving that portion of the military property equal to the historical contribution to the creation and development of the Armed Forces, the infrastructure, the building of military facilities, and so on. If this is not tackled through talks and agreements, there may be a certain discord—which in essence is what is being observed.

[Chemodanova] Leonid Grigoriyevich, how are matters relating to republics that have left the USSR, who have declared their secession and who have not signed the Economic Community Treaty, to be tackled?

[Ivashov] Well, again, I think, only by civilized methods, by way of agreements and in no other way. After all, in its time the Soviet Union joined the declaration on the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation between states in keeping with the U.N. Charter. All those republics who have left the Union are the legal successors of the international obligations of the USSR. The abovementioned declaration defines that all disputes between states should be resolved through talks on the basis of sovereign equality, but not by the methods that are being employed by a number of republics today.

In the event of the opposite being the case, ahead of us lies great unpleasantnesses, not to speak of tragic consequences. I hope to God that all this reaches the politicans and leaders at the various levels who are now wielding power.

Military Doctrine Proposed for 'Union' Security

PM1012095991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 7 Dec 91 Union Edition p 1

[Untitled report from IZVESTIYA, TASS, RIA, INTERFAX column]

[Text] The USSR Armed Forces General Staff Center for Operational and Strategic Studies has prepared the draft of a new military doctrine.

The compilers of the draft reckon that military doctrine should be integrated into the concept for the nationwide security of the Union and define concrete measures to ensure the state's security against an external military threat by both political-diplomatic and military means.

Estonia

Republic Not To Join Commonwealth

OW1212034091 Moscow BALTFAX in English 2111 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Chairman of the Estonian parliament Arnold Ruutel has stated that Estonia has no intention of joining the Commonwealth of Independent States. However, speaking in parliament December 11th, he pointed out that "it is necessary to work out a policy which would guarantee good relations with the Slavonic states."

Talks With USSR To Become Talks With Russia

OW1212034191 Moscow BALTFAX in English 2111 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In an interview with BF [BALTFAX] Ago Tiiman, head of the Estonian Coordinating Bureau for talks with the Soviet Union, said that "the regular working meeting scheduled for December 2nd was cancelled on our initiative."

"On December 29th [as received] it became clear that the Soviet delegation for talks with Estonia has lost its authorities in connection with Sobchak's resignation as its head", Mr. Tiiman said. He added that for the present the two sides discuss all matters by telephone. However, Estonia has not received any formal confirmation of the Soviet delegation's resignation.

Mr. Tiiman believes future Soviet-Estonian talks will turn into Russian-Estonian ones since the question of Soviet troops' withdrawal from the Baltics and border control concern directly to Russia. "At this point we should wait until the other side settles its problems", he noted.

Estonian Deputy Foreign Minister Rein Mullerson told the newspaper "Paevaleht" that after the signing of the Brest agreement Estonia's partners at talks are Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. "We should immediately start consultations with them on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Estonia", he said.

Mr. Mullerson pointed out that the creation of the Commonwealth has caused certain new dangers for Estonia. One of them comes from the uncertainty: Who is the commander-in-chief of the USSR Armed Forces? Another danger comes from the military in the Baltics. "Some Soviet Army officers say they may not carry out the order to leave the Baltics since there are no normal living conditions in their new places of service", he noted.

Guards Check Documents at Russian Border

OW1212045091 Moscow BALTFAX in English 2042 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Estonian border guards check documents of all those entering the republic at the main highways, the port and the Tallinn airport, as well as the railroads in Narva, Valga and Moisakula. About 50,000 passengers a day have their documents checked.

The border guards say on December 1st, the first day of the check-up, they detained 372 people without documents, 315 of them were sent back. On December 2nd 918 people were detained, 616 of them were also sent back.

Documents are still not checked at the railroad on the southwestern border between Russia and Estonia (the Pechora district of the Pskov region). For the present, only 80 percent of all trains are examined.

As is known, on January 10th, 1992, Estonia introduces entrance visas.

Meanwhile, as Aare Evisalu, spokesman for the Estonian Home Defense and Border Control Department, told BF [BALTFAX], on December 11th Russian border guards began checking documents of people travelling from Estonia to Russia.

Military Recruits Quit Over Conditions

OW0712194191 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1700 GMT 7 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Estonian newspaper PAEVALEHT reports that most of the young men called up for government service on December 2 and assigned to the Penitentiary Department, have left the barracks and returned home. Of the 205 men only 23 remain in service. According to the paper, the recruits found their living conditions unbearable the barracks were unheated, and the mattresses and blankets damp. The young men were offered to wash only in cold water, and to feed only on macaroni and rice. Their command consisted of ex-Soviet Army officers who did not speak Estonian.

Defense Forces To Replace Soviet Troops

LD1012053991 Moscow TASS in English 1711 GMT 9 Dec 91

[By correspondent Aleksandr Kharchenko]

[Text] Tallinn December 9 TASS—A total of 250 men from Estonian towns and villages have received call-up papers from the republican interior defence units.

"We have to form two units to replace the Soviet Interior Ministry's escort regiment and police regiment," commander of the Estonian defence forces' general headquarters Anto Laanjeots told TASS.

"The crime rate is growing. We have to restore order. The young men to be called up in January will join formations of the border guard department."

Laanjeots, former colonel of the Soviet Army, lamented over the fact that Estonia has so far no law to establish the republican defence structure. Still he hopes the law will be adopted by the end of this year.

The Republic will have only defence forces equipped with anti-tank, light anti-aircraft and other systems of the type, Laanjeots said.

Three services of the Armed Forces will then be created: the army, the air defence and a small fleet. The formation of the defence forces will begin with light infantry units.

The personnel will be recruited on contract or draft.

The strength of the defence forces in peace times will depend on the term of active service established by the republican parliament, Anto Laanjeots noted.

First Western Military Attache Accredited

OW1012121891 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1110 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The first military attache of a Western state, Ove Sundkvist [name as received] of Sweden, with his aide Harry Ollinen, was accredited in Estonia on Monday [9 December] since 1940.

He presented his credentials to Minister of State Raivo Vare who noted in his welcoming speech that Estonia has neither a defence ministry nor a defence minister of its own yet.

Supreme Soviet Passes Law on Economic Zone

OW1112151891 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1138 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Supreme Council of Estonia passed yesterday a law establishing the Estonian Republic's economic zone.

Under the document, the border of the republic's economic zone beyond its territorial waters in the Baltic Sea and the Bay of Finland will run along the Soviet Union's former economic border with Sweden and Finland; in respect to Latvia and Lithuania, it will be established under special treaties.

The Estonian Government is expected to draft a law on the economic zone and continental shelf, and submit it to parliament within the next two months.

Republic To Charge for Entry, Exit Visas

PM1012144191 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 6 Dec 91 First Edition p 4

[RIA report: "Five Hundred Rubles To Enter Estonia?"]

[Text] According to information received by the RUSSIAN INFORMATION AGENCY, the Estonian Government is examining a draft law on citizens' entry and exit. According to this draft law, an exit visa for Estonian citizens entering other republics of the former Union will cost 200 rubles, while a visa enabling citizens of other republics to enter Estonia will cost 500 rubles. If this draft law is adopted, the introduction of the visas can be expected mid-January 1992.

Latvia

Republic Not Planning To Join Commonwealth

LD1212114991 Moscow TASS in English 1017 GMT 12 Dec 91

[By correspondent Vladimir Solntsev]

[Text] Tokyo December 12 TASS—Visiting Latvian Foreign Minister Janis Jurkans has said all twelve republics of the collapsing Soviet Union might join the new commowealth, signed by leaders of the three Slav states. He told Japanese First Deputy Foreign Minister Hisashi Owada the Soviet Union may then become a commonwealth similar to the Common Market.

The minister said Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are not planning to join the new commonwealth.

He praised Soviet president, who did not impede Baltic independence, but said Mikhail Gorbachev's rule is coming to an end.

The Latvian foreign minister is making a tour of Asian countries. He will also visit Singapore and South Korea.

Supreme Soviet Debates Ways To Avert Coup

LD1212102591 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 0600 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Excerpt] The Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Latvia is due today to discuss measures planned to avert or suppress a possible coup. In this context, Mirinov, the commander of the USSR Northwestern Military District, has been invited to the plenary sitting. On the agenda will be a resolution on the organizing of the register of inhabitants that was passed in law yesterday. Also on the agenda, receiving its third reading, will be the bill on state control, plus two bills in their first reading containing several amendments to the legal code. Anatolijs Gorbunovs, chairman of the Supreme

Soviet of the Republic of Latvia, will today meet U.S. Deputy Finance Secretary Robson.

Trade, Economic Agreement Signed With Georgia

LD0712220691 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 0630 GMT 7 Dec 91

[Text] As we have already informed, Latvian Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis stayed yesterday in Georgia. He met with Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia and government representatives. The prime ministers of both states signed a trade and economic agreement, but the Latvian External Trade Minister Edgars Zausajevs and the corresponding representative of the Georgian Government signed a protocol on the supplies of more important types of products. In the afternoon, a news conference was held. Today, Ivars Godmanis leaves for Yerevan.

Conscription To Continue Until 31 Dec

OW0612154691 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1130 GMT 6 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] BF's [BALTFAX] Riga correspondent reports that the conscription campaign that opened in Latvia on October 1 will continue till December 31.

The republic's border troops have been fully staffed with servicemen whose training proceeds at special centers. There will be a total of 5,000 border guard. of whom 70% will be volunteers, and the rest—persons called up for compulsory government service.

Aleksandr Doniks, head of the government service department of the ex-Public Security Department of the Latvian Council of Ministers, has told BF that the republic's interior troops are expected to have been fully staffed by the end of December. At present, the convoy regiment already has 86% of the necessary personnel.

Mr. Doniks noted that the demobilization of Latvian officers and warrant officers from the Soviet Army had been rather slow.

The Latvian Defense Ministry has received applications for service in the republican armed forces from 240 people currently seeking to demobilize from the Soviet Army.

Lithuania

Landsbergis Backs Commonwealth, Troop Witdrawal

OW1212115691 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1115 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The head of the Lithuanian parliament Vytautas Landsbergis has sent a letter of congratulation to the Russian President Boris Yeltsin on signing the Brest accords. He praised the "resolute actions of the leaders of Russia, the Ukraine, and Belarus."

The message urges Yeltsin to appeal to the West together for economic aid that would promote the faster withdrawal of Soviet troops from Lithuania. (The Soviet military insist that the withdrawal cannot begin before 1994.) According to Landsbergis, this aid could be spent on the solution of the socio-economic problems of servicemen transferred from Lithuania to Russia. The Lithuanian leader invited Russia to send a commission to study the needs and problems of servicemen in the republic.

Republic To Send Food to Moscow

OW0912233791 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1440 GMT 9 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] "The government of Lithuania will find ways of improving food supplies to Moscow," Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius said on Lithuanian TV.

Referring to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's statement that Moscow's food resources would last for only two days, the Lithuanian prime minister said that no one should be gloating over this circumstance, and that Lithuania herself should take a due lesson.

He urged the Lithuanian public organizations to show compassion to Russia and to her people "despite the fact that for 50 years the USSR did not recognize Lithuania as a state." He expressed confidence that now Moscow would duly appreciate assistance and support given to it.

Minister Notes 'Signs' of Army Withdrawal

LD0812100191 Vilnius Radio Vilnius International Service in Lithuanian 0200 GMT 7 Dec 91

[By Roma Pakeniene]

[Text] The negotiations between Vilnius and Moscow on the withdrawal of the Soviet Army are still being delayed. However, there are some signs of the withdrawal. Radio Vilnius has been told about this by Deputy Prime Minister Zigmas Vaisvila, who is coping in the Lithuanian Government with affairs concerning the withdrawal of the Army.

The most evident example is that three-quarters of the Soviet Internal Troops have been withdrawn from Lithuania. No such troops will be in Lithuania by 1 February 1992. As is known, these troops are not the subunit of the Soviet Army. They are subordinate to the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs and mainly carry out the functions of patrolling and protecting prisons. Four regiments of these troops are deployed in Kaunas, Siauliai, Vilnius, and Snieckus. Two special regiments in Snieckus were sent to Lithuania at the beginning of this

year and took part in the January events in Vilnius. According to Zigmas Vaisvila, these regiments are no longer in Snieckus. Aproximately 100 people remain in each regiment in Vilnius and Kaunas. They guard the prisons. The training regiment in Siauliai should be withdrawn in December.

By February of next year, when the Ministry of National Defense takes over the protection of prisons, there will be no interior troops in Lithuania. In all, there were up to 10,000 such troops.

The interior troops constitute only a small part of the Soviet Army. The withdrawal of the interior troops from Lithuania is taking place in accordance with the dates coordinated by the Lithuanian and Soviet Ministries of Internal Affairs, although there are no signed official documents.

According to Zigmas Vasisvila, there are signs that the regular Army is also moving silently and unnoticed from Lithuania. It is learned from well-informed sources that Moscow has given orders to withdraw from Lithuania the most expensive equipment and to cease construction. The fact of withdrawing equipment has been confirmed by Zigmas Vaisvila. In addition, construction units have left Snieckus.

Meanwhile, the Lithuanian Government demands that by the new year two airborne divisions, Soviet reconnaissance units, and all military units stationed in Vilnius be withdrawn from Lithuania. According to Vaisvila, there are fewer men in the motorized infantry division in Vilnius than before, and some equipment is being taken away. This, in the opinion of the deputy prime minister, is linked with Gorbachev's decree about renaming the Baltic Military District the Northwestern Military Group, thus admitting its stay on the territories of other states. According to international practice, such army groups are not deployed in the state capitals. According to that decree, the Soviet military headquarters has been transferred from Riga to a reserve command locality in Adazi, not far from the Latvian capital.

In Riga, as in Vilnius and Tallinn, the Army numbers are noticeably declining. It is assumed that there were about 10,000-12,000 soldiers in Vilnius, and, according to various sources, in Lithuania the number could be from 40,000 to 80,000.

Preparations to leave have been noticed also in three airborne divisions deployed near Kaunas and Alytus. Vaisvila expressed his doubts about their imminent move. These divisions have well-equipped bases and hardly will be ready to easily hand them over. The same can be said about the Soviet reconnaissance units.

At the beginning of October Lithuania's representatives were allowed into the most important object of the Soviet military intelligence—the center for monitoring and state communications near Kaunas in Linksmakalnis. Their inspection started but later stopped, and the military did not allow anyone in. According to Zigmas Vaisvila, the government will be compelled to take strict and unilateral actions.

Information is on hand that an Air Force unit started moving from Lithuania. One unit is deployed near Siauliai. The anti-aircraft defense units are also preparing to leave. They are deployed near Vilnius, Snieckus, and on the Baltic coast.

The government is concerned about such secret withdrawal of the Army because it has claims to a part of the Soviet Army's equipment. Lithuania is ready to negotiate about this, but Minister of National Defense Audrius Butkevicius thinks that the whole Army wealth in Lithuania is the property of Lithuania. According to him, Lithuania's contribution to the Soviet military budget constitutes about 2 percent. This means Lithuania may have a claim to this amount.

No less concern is created for the Lithuanin Government by a rather critical situation in the Soviet Army units themselves, especially in the so-called northern townlet in Vilnius. According to Zigmas Vaisvila, not only ordinary soildiers but also officers are often engaged in heavy drinking there. Lately there have been shootings and human casualties.

Last week the Vilnius military were playing by switching off electric power in several Vilnius housing estates. Recently there was a conflict between the soldiers in the paratroop unit in Rukla, near Joanava. According to the military, paratroopers from the famous Pskov division arrived there to introduce order. The number of crimes committed by Soviet soldiers has sharply increased in Lithuania. The unit commanders admit themselves that they do not control the situation. The commander of the Army stationed in the Baltic states, General Mironov, is also concerned about this. He has asked the Lithuanian Government to investigate these conflicts and other crimes in the Soviet units.

Radio Vilnius was told by Zigmas Vaisvila that all this shows what a dangerous hotbed this Army is. One should recall recent ultimatums by the military stating that they would not obey orders to leave the Baltic states. About a month ago they stated that they would not leave Lithuania until normal living conditions are created for them in Russia. Not long ago there was a broadcast on Lithuanian TV where they complained being abandoned both by their leadership and by the presidents of Russia and the Soviet Union. Therefore, they have decided to form a coordinating council to defend the rights of the Russian-speaking residents in the Baltic states. According to them, all decisions on the withdrawal of the Army must be coordinated with that council. They also appealed to President Gorbachev and the Russian leadership, demanding that their rights be controlled, social guarantees ensured, and the withdrawal of the Army not increased.

The Lithuanian Government is ready to help the military solve social problems and has accomplished a great

deal in this regard. For instance, a decision was adopted recently to allow the military to sell at auction apartments that they vacate. They want this very much.

Meanwhile, the Soviet military leadership is asked to state how many military men wish to leave. Knowing their number, we would be able to talk and negotiate on the creation of social well-being for these people in Russia or somewhere else, Minister of National Defense Audrius Butkevicius said in his television broadcast.

This number is not known. According to Deputy Prime Minister Zigmas Vaisvila, delay is not useful to either side, because it increases social and political tension. The Lithuanian Government believes that with goodwill and political wisdom all problems of the Soviet Army in Lithuania can be solved without difficulties. In the opinion of Zigmas Vaisvila, two years would be sufficient for this. By the beginning of 1994 there should not be a Soviet Army in Lithuania.

Troops To Leave If Given Apartments in USSR

OW1212050891 Moscow BALTFAX in English 2111 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Colonel Valeri Frolov, commander of the Northern military station's division in Vilnius, told the newspaper "Respublika" that "the military wil abandon Lithuania only after they are given apartments in the Soviet Union.".

Asked by a journalist whether there are officers who would like to stay in Lithuania for permanent residence, Frolow said that "there are few of them".

"We are in the foreign state, that is why we must leave", he concluded.

Extradition of TV Center Perpetrators Sought

OW1212120591 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1115 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The presidium of the Lithuanian parliament has approved the list of persons responsible for the tragic developments in Vilnius last August submitted by the country's Procurator General Arturas Paulauskas. Civilians died on the night of January 13 when the military stormed the TV tower and center in Vilnius.

The list consists of 14 persons, among them former leaders of the Lithuanian Communist Party and several Soviet military leaders. According to Paulauskas, all these persons are in Moscow. The Lithuanian parliament intends to appeal to the Russian parliament and procurator for the extradition of these persons.

Parliament Passes Citizenship Law 5 Dec

LD0712202291 Vilnius Radio Vilnius International Service in Lithuanian 0200 GMT 6 Dec 91

[Text] On 5 December, the Lithuanian citizenship law was adopted in parliament, but a decision on its coming into force was not yet endorsed. Examining today in parliament the interpellation by the liberal faction to Deputy Prime Minister Zigmas Vaisvila on his lack of competence as State Security Department head, the deputies, as they themselves later admitted, exceeded the limits of ethics and failed to limit themselves to the concrete topic of the discussion. Deputy Jonas Tamulis, on behalf of the liberal faction, stated that the interpellation was withdrawn.

Defense Minister Denies Resignation Rumors

OW1212021891 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1415 GMT 9 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] "All the rumours about my possible resignation are based on the attacks of Antanas Terleckas, the leader of the League of Free Lithuania," Audrius Butkevicius, Lithuania's Defence Minister, told the newspaper Respublika. Mr. Butkevicius described all allegations that he had prevented the Lithuanian defence system from being adequately equipped as absurd and said that all those attacks were "simple political intrigues". "Armament is part of the general state programme," he said. "In this particular situation one person cannot solve this problem. This is the responsibility of the entire state," he said.

Supreme Soviet

Presidium Forwards Minsk Accord for Ratification

LD1112205191 Moscow TASS in English 2032 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 11 TASS—The Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet decided to forward the agreement on the new commonwealth to the next parliamentary session for ratification, the press centre of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation reported.

Khasbulatov on Commonwealth

LD1112221991 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2100 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Ruslan Khasbulatov, the head of the Russian parliament, intends to use all his influence to prove the expedience and necessity of the agreement on creating a Commonwealth of Independent States. He told correspondent this following his arrival in Moscow from Seoul, where he had been on an official visit at the invitation of South Korean parliament.

According to Khasbulatov, the agreement on a Commonwealth meets the interests of the people, society, and modern civilization. Khasbulatov also expressed satisfaction over the fact that the leaders of the three republics decided to transfer the date of introducing radical economic reforms to 2 January.

Highlights of 11 Dec Proceedings

LD1212015291

[Editorial Report] Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian at 2231 GMT on 11 December broadcast the program "At the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Session," recorded highlights of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet proceedings in Moscow on 11 December.

The program began with the unidentified Soviet of the Union chair calling on the head of a subcommittee of the Committee for the Affairs of Soviets to report on the deliberations of his subcommittee concerning the draft law on the status of Moscow as the capital of Russia. The unidentified subcommittee head said that the aim of the draft law is to help the Moscow City Soviet to develop the innovations that have already taken place in the status of the city and to resolve conflicts with the RSFSR Government.

At 2236 GMT a member of the presidium of the Moscow City Soviet said that the administrative reform in Moscow is taking place too rapidly. Legality must be observed, he said.

At 2238 GMT Moscow City Soviet Deputy Plotnikov said that Moscow is in a crisis. It is separated from Moscow Oblast and can only earn its living from its intellectual potential. The structure of administration in Moscow must be reorganized, he said.

At 2240 GMT the draft law on the status of Moscow was passed.

At 2241 GMT RSFSR Interior Minister Andrey Dunayev reported on the situation in South Ossetia, summing up the position in Tskhinvali and the measures taken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the internal troops to alleviate it.

At 2248 GMT Yegor Gaydar, deputy chairman of the RSFSR Government, spoke on the economic aspect of the Ossetian situation, enumerating the resources that have been allocated to North Ossetia to deal with the refugees from South Ossetia.

At 2249 GMT RSFSR Foreign Minister Kozyrev said that the Foreign Ministry has made representations to the permanent Georgian representative in Moscow concerning the Ossetian situation. These representations were rejected as unwarranted interference in the affairs of Georgia by an imperialist and communist power. Georgia had even tried to use them internally, as further evidence of the need for complete independence from Russia, he said. Other approaches to convey Russian concern over the Ossetian situation were tried, but these also yielded little or nothing. The Foreign Ministry's ability to influence the situation is extremely limited, Kozyrev concluded, but he will try to keep parliament informed of any developments.

At 2253 GMT a commission to draw up a draft decision on the Ossetian situation was elected by a show of hands.

At 2255 GMT Yegor Gaydar, deputy chairman of the RSFSR Government, spoke about preparations for carrying out economic reform. The original idea was to free prices on 16 December. Since the Minsk agreement, the date has been pushed back to 2 January at the request of Ukraine and Belarus. He says that lists of goods, with indications of their new prices, if any, are being drawn up and should be ready by 1 January. The prices of oil and petroleum products should rise by 500 percent, as should the prices of other power sources. This figure has been taken as a basis for price rises relating to other goods and commodities. Subsidies are to be retained, he said, in the case of some goods, especially foodstuffs, such as bread and milk. Tax modifications are also planned, and the corresponding instructions are being drafted in collaboration with Belarus and Ukraine, concluded Gaydar.

The program ended at 2301 GMT.

Gaydar Addresses Presidium

LD1212073191 Moscow TASS in English 0650 GMT 12 Dec 91

[By TASS parliamentary correspondent Galina Vinnitskaya]

[Text] Moscow December 12 TASS—The government is currently preparing measures towards market economy,

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaydar said addressing the parliament on Wednesday [11 December].

According to Gaydar, the three Slav commonwealth states have agreed to free prices as of January 2, except for a few necessities whose prices will be determined by government. Acts to limit monopoly prices are being worked out.

Value added tax is being discussed in the parliaments of Ukraine and Belorussia, and, if adopted, control will be simplified across the three Slav states as Russia has already adopted the law on value added tax.

Gaydar announced that Russian President Boris Yeltsin has asked the group of seven industrialised states to help create a stabilisation fund which will eventually lead to a convertible ruble.

The privatisation programme will be introduced to the parliament within a few days, Gaydar said. A system of export quotas is being launched in Russia to protect Russian economic sovereignty.

Deputies Debate Commonwealth Status 12 Dec

LD1212105491

[Editorial Report] Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian at 0850 GMT on 12 December broadcast a live relay the RSFSR Supreme Soviet session in Moscow. The relay opened with Foreign Minister Kozyrev on the platform answering questions and giving his view on the benefits of the Slavic Commonwealth. He termed it a union of equal partners. He gave the United States of America as the clearest example of a federal structure.

At 0900 GMT an unidentified deputy asked from the floor if people can still count upon economic decentralization under the commonwealth. Gaydar responded by differentiating between economic decentralization and political unity.

At 0903 GMT Kozyrev was asked about the future of human rights, the state structure, and the USSR Armed Forces. He explained that the army oath is to the people, not to a state structure, which was illustrated during the August coup when the army sided with the people.

At 0904 GMT Deputy Filipov from St. Petersburg, a member of the Democratic Russia grouping, asked Gaydar how the commonwealth formation affects arrangements for providing people with food. Gaydar acknowledged difficulties with the supply of foods from the republics but said that supplies are resuming.

At 0905 GMT an unidentified deputy from Nizhnenovgorod asked about the status of Russian troops on the territory of the newly independent states. He asked if they are occupiers? Should they be withdrawn? Kozyrev said it is the aim to withdraw Russian troops from independent states. He said one cannot call the Soviet army the Russian army, and talks will be upcoming on a military-political alliance.

At 0907 GMT Khasbulatov moved the session on from questions to voting on whether to accept written requests to speak, then on how long deputies are to be allowed to speak.

At 0910 GMT deputies voted to allow speakers up to five minutes each. Khasbulatov allocated one hour for speakers before a vote was taken. He recalled that the Commonwealth was discussed all day yesterday in committees and commissions.

At 0913 GMT the first speaker was Deputy Shuykov. He expressed concern at the lack of clarity concerning issues such as control over nuclear weapons and the legal status of the Commonwealth. He acknowledged the reality that the Ukraine and Belarus rejected the 1922 treaty on borders and the USSR, and advocated ratifying the Minsk agreement today. He called for reservations to be registered concerning the authority of Soviet legislation, the status of the Soviet Army, and on attaching conditions for entry into the Commonwealth. He asked, should Georgia in its current state seek entry?

At 0919 GMT Deputy Sheynis was called and forthcoming speakers were warned to be ready.

At 0920 GMT Sheynis opened by stressing the historic importance of today's decision and adovcated ratifying the agreement on the Commonwealth of Independent States but with reservations concerning the constitutional status of the agreement as it stands.

At 0923 GMT Deputy Sheynis said that there should be more discussion with the Ukraine about borders. Former republics which do not recognize human rights should not be allowed to join the Commonwealth until they pledge to observe them. Coordinating bodies will be needed to see us through the crisis.

At 0927 GMT Deputy Novikov, speaking for non-party deputies, said they endorse the agreement with some reservations. Issues of how to legislate for the future commonwealth have been ignored. A small but effective center will be needed, perhaps creating a coordination center in a small town, rather than an existing capital.

At 0932 GMT Deputy Sevastyanov said the country is in a difficult position. Everyone is fatigued. Where does the path now offered us lead? He said he hopes it leads forward, for the imediate future at least, but in the long run it seems to have poor prospects. The agreement is unrefined. It reflects the interests of three states. Sevastyanov questioned part of the agreement concerning "national minorities," asking what happened to considering them as "peoples" and querying semantics of the passage concerning control of the armed forces. He said the matter should be settled by constitutional means by convening a full Congress of People's Deputies.

At 0938 GMT Deputy Morokin said the center and Gorbachev have been hampering reforms for the last 18 months. The Novo-Ogarevo process could not succeed without the Ukraine. Morokin, representing Tatarstan, said that there is too much emphasis on the Slav aspect in the new agreement. All members of the Commonwealth must respect human rights. Morokin calls for support for the agreement.

At 0943 GMT Deputy Volkov said he is speaking for Democratic Russia, which has always supported a Union, but a Union from below, not from above. He read a statement declaring that the Democratic Russia deputies support the commonwealth agreement and call on others to do likewise. The Army is called on to protect citizens of the Commonwealth and ensure peace. Foreign states are called on to support the Commonwealth. He said that USSR people's deputies from Russia should be recalled from the USSR Supreme Soviet.

At 0949 GMT Deputy Baburin said that the proposition amounts to getting rid of the state in order to get rid of Gorbachev and his ineffective center. He read a statement condemning the agreement and calling for a unified, federative state. He questioned the Supreme Soviet's right to change the RSFSR Constitution, saying that this is the prerogative of a congress. He ended by criticizing the performance of the Russian Government.

At 0955 GMT Deputy Filippov commented on the economic aspects of the agreement. It will help to settle the economy by strengthening the ruble, he contended. He said that taxation policies will have to be harmonized. He ended by calling for approval of the agreement.

At 0959 GMT Khasbulatov announced a 30-minute break; the relay ended.

At 1033 GMT Konstantinov asked for the text of the amendments to the agreement adopted by the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet to be read. Khasbulatov said that these are to be the subject of further talks. The text we are discussing today remains for the present as it stands. IZVESTIYA has published some amendments, but in reality they are just proposals for discussion.

At 1035 GMT Deputy (Selivanov) said that if there are any amendments, they should be printed and circulated to the deputies. He asked what procedure was agreed for handling amendments submitted by any of the Supreme Soviets?

At 1036 GMT Yeltsin said there were no amendments from the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, just proposals for further discussion.

At 1037 GMT Khasbulatov said they have been printed in great detail in IZVESTIYA and asked for arrangements to be made for deputies to receive copies of it. He invited Volkogonov to take the floor.

Volkogonov said that the Union was a possibility until August of this year. Thereafter there were two possibilities—a tough centralized system or a group of independent principalities. He said we have a compromise between those possibilities. He said he is sure that the agreement will be ratified and outlines his reasons. He said that we need some coordinating bodies, such as a presidential council, and also that we need to follow the example of the British Commonwealth of Nations. He pointed out that we are a nuclear commonwealth and need unified armed forces.

At 1043 GMT (Zasukhin) from Kamchatka proposed that ratification be put to a vote.

At 1044 GMT Khasbulatov invited Nikolay Travkin to take the floor. Travkin said that contrary to press reports, he did not oppose the agreement. The Minsk agreement can be adopted in addition to the Union agreement sponsored by the president. As Russians we cannot take upon ourselves responsibility for ending the existence of this state. Kozyrev and others have said that the agreement is a declaration. The Novo-Ogarevo draft Union treaty already exists. It was produced as the fruit of a large amount of work. He asked why throw all this away and waste time going over the same ground again when we could be working on economic reform? He touched on the situation in Russia, noting there has been no start to reforms, there are no mechanisms, no land law, and no real start to privatization. He called on deputies to ratify both the agreement and the Union treaty.

At 1049 GMT Abdulatipov took the floor and said that we, along with the fatherland, have been let down by the center, which we all once supported. The president has forgotten how to move forward in all his moves to the left and right. He called for support for the agreement and for recognition of Dudayev in Checheno-Ingushetia. We have to look for companions in arms and friends, not enemies and opponents.

At 1056 GMT Khasbulatov suggested three additional speakers, including Sobchak. The suggestion was adopted.

At 1058 GMT an unidentified deputy from the floor suggested an end to debate and called for a vote. Another deputy suggested extending discussion until the break and then to pass the matter over to a special Congress of RSFSR People's Deputies for final decision.

At 1100 GMT Deputy Sobchak opened his speech by saying that the economic situation today is such that we cannot waste any more time on endless discussion of our future. I call upon you to ratify the proposed agreement, but before doing so, sort out for yourselves a whole series of problems that arise in this connection. He touched on the Constitution and the preamble to the USSR Constitution. The preamble does not prevent the president and parliament from entering into agreements, he noted. Subsequent steps might require changes to the Constitution. He said any amendments, as suggested by the

Ukraine, require further processing. Sobchak asked what will be the successor to the USSR? He said that the agreement should contain a clause noting the rights of the founders of the agreement so that those joining at the beginning are recognized as such. In conclusion he said that validity of the Union laws should be extended.

At 1109 GMT Khasbulatov took the rostrum and called on deputies to ratify the agreement. Those who criticize it have some grounds for doing so—the roots of the Union go deep—but the bitter truth is that this Union has started to fall apart. This is no doubt the last chance we have for retaining something of our ties. The alliance is not directed against anyone. It is an open community. He called on deputies to ratify the agreement.

At 1114 GMT Deputy Blokhin raised a point of order from the floor. He complained about the way the vote to terminate the debate was ignored. Khasbulatov disagreed, saying he had already invited Sobchak to speak.

At 1116 GMT Deputy Sergeyev called for the vote to be by name. Deputies voted on this point: 181 in favor, 11 against.

At 1117 GMT an unidentified deputy raised a point from the floor, saying that it should be dealt with not in the form of a resolution but as though it were a law.

At 1118 GMT an unidentified deputy explained the procedural considerations. It should be adopted as a resolution of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. Khasbulatov put the draft resolution to a vote and asked everyone to sit down.

At 1119 GMT deputies continued to try to make points from the floor. Khasbulatov explained that the vote is on the resolution as a basis. He told deputies to vote: 185 in favor; five against; six abstentions.

At 1121 GMT Khasbulatov asked for a vote on the resolution supporting the agreement on establishment the Commonwealth of Independent States: 188 in favor; six against; seven abstentions. The deputies applauded.

At 1123 GMT Yeltsin was given the floor. He thanked the deputies for their work and congratulated them on their decision.

At 1126 GMT Khasbulatov told the deputies that other documents are to be circulated among them.

At this point the relay ended.

Yeltsin Addresses Presidium

LD1212094591 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0804 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Speech by President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin at the 12 December Supreme Soviet session in Moscow—live]

[Text] Esteemed chairman, esteemed people's deputies, citizens of the Russian Federation: On 7-8 December events of fundamental importance took place. The heads of state of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine, following intensive talks, concluded an agreement on forming the Commonwealth of Independent States. The main thing is this: The talks in Belarus were a logical consequence of the processes that have been developing lately. For several years the country has been experiencing a profound crisis of statehood. The decay of the powerful organs at the center has led to a loss of governability, has strengthened the economic crisis and the fall in the people's living standards, and has increased social instability. As long ago as two years, it became clear that the Union structures were not capable of radical change. On the contrary, the command system has drawn on its last strength in order to preserve its absolute power and became the main obstacle for reforms.

The declarations of sovereignty of 1990 radically changed the situation. The unitary model of the Union was effectively buried, but this could not or would not be understood. On the contrary, a long period of preparation of the Union treaty, dragging on for many months, nearly a year, followed. It was often conducted with strong-arm tactics. New drafts of the treaty followed one another. In essence, the same old model of a union with a strong center was being ascribed to all of them. The principle of sovereignty was recognized only as a decorative embellishment, but in reality it was being trampled upon ruthlessly.

It was only in April, in Novo-Ogarevo, that a step toward reality was at long last taken, but it came too late. During the entire course of the talks, eight republics out of 15 already turned their backs on the Union. The temptation to preserve power over the republics, albeit in a truncated form, emerged again. Despite this, republics were ready to enter into a compromise and to sign the Union treaty in order to accelerate, if only slightly, the reforms and to go forward faster. The sovereign republics expected to enshrine in the treaty obligatory regulations for relations to be undertaken both by the republics and by the center. This approach was destroyed in the days of the August putsch, which ripened and was prepared in the midst of the leadership. It became clear that there would be no lasting union for a long time if the main thing, the self-multiplication of the center's command structures, was not removed.

The past few months teach us that any opportunity for this is used without delay: A new structure appears in place of a structure that has been removed. Moreover, the system of government is thereby made more complex and confused. The sovereign states move even further away from one another, and new, artificial problems are created. After the August events, the break-up of the Soviet Union entered its final phase; its death throes began. The majority of states declared their independence. They adopted corresponding legislative acts. Some union republics officially seceded from the union and were recognized at the international level. At the

same time we literally started to drown in endless talks and agreements, wide and narrow discussions, and consultations.

All this has acquired the bad characteristic of inconclusiveness. Against a backdrop of the most acute economic crisis and the shortage of essential goods, games of this sort increasingly began to annoy ordinary citizens. Such a development of events could only result in the further disintegration of the country. In order to do something to alleviate their position, one by one, the republics started to undertake measures to rescue themselves and to protect their interests by their own means. A dangerous tendency took shape. Blockades of goods, border closures, and economic wars could have become a reality as soon as tomorrow.

On 1 December, the people of the Ukraine came out for independence following a referendum. The Ukraine refused to sign the treaty. The consequences of this are obvious—it seriously disturbs the geo- political balance in the world and makes for an escalation of the conflicts within the former Union. It entails the establishment of state borders, of national currency, of a separate army, and other problems. The Ukraine has nuclear arms in the bargain. In these circumstances it would have been simply criminal to conclude a union treaty comprising seven republics without the Ukraine, or to remain unperturbed, waiting for more accords and not undertaking anything.

A scenario for the development of events which presupposes that force is used has, again, begun to emerge more and more openly. Calls to restore control over the whole territory of the former Union by any means began to be heard louder and louder. I think that members of parliament and citizens of Russia know just as well as I do what the results of such variant of the development of events would have been. It was essential urgently to take decisive steps to break the unfavorable course of events. This was done in Minsk at the end of last week. The main result is the following: three republics, founders of the USSR, have halted a process of a spontaneous and anarchic disintegration of the common space inhabited by our peoples. The only possible formula has been found for living together in the new conditions: a commonwealth of independent states and not of a state in which no one has independence. The agreement states that the USSR ceases to exist, but I reject accusations against the signatories that they have willfully liquidated the USSR. The Union is already incapable of playing a positive role in relations between its former members. The world community has started to consider it bankrupt. The central bank has stated that in general it has nothing with which to pay for any expenditures. Our states, as founders of the union, simply had no right to close their eyes to this. To tarry with such a difficult conclusion would be to continue living in a world of illusions and to bring catastrophic consequences closer. The conclusion was made not in order to destroy anything; on the contrary, the task was to save everything healthy that could be saved, and on this basis to build a realistic model of a commonwealth.

From the constitutional point of view it is important to stress that, in forming the union in 1922, the founders of the union did not lose their state sovereignty and their status and responsibility of founders of the union. This was enshrined in all Union constitutions, including the last one. Therefore, strictly speaking, the conclusion registered in Minsk could also have been arrived at by the republics within the framework of the 1977 Constitution, especially after the proclamation of their declaration on sovereignty and the referendum in Ukraine. All charges that this step is unconstitutional are unfounded and pursue either political aims which are essentially destructive or openly personal selfish interests.

Under the present conditions only the Commonwealth of independent states is capable of ensuring the preservation of a political, legal, and economic space which has been taking shape over centuries but which has now been almost lost. Only the Commonwealth is capable of strengthening it upon a new voluntary and democratic foundation. The agreement is the base for the dynamic development of a new type of links between sovereign states. An end has been put to the main obstacle to this, the union center, which turned out to be incapable of freeing itself from the traditions of the former system, the main one of which was the appropriated right to be in command of the peoples and to fetter the independence of the republics.

We were rapidly able to find mutual understanding because the agreement reflects something that our states and our parliaments have been fighting throughout the whole of this time. The main positions and approaches were coordinated a year ago when four republics—Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and the Ukraine—made preparations for a four-party agreement in December last year. True, on that occasion it was not concluded but its points of principle have withstood virtually all the tests of time.

A most important result of the talks lies in the fact that an agreement has been achieved for cooperation in the implementation of economic reform. For the first time in many months a considerable part of the economic space of the former union will develop in accordance with a coordinated economic policy. It is a question not just of movement in the same direction but, first and foremost, of close cooperation, of a single pace, and consistency of action.

The documents which have been signed record the will of the republics to preserve a single currency unit, the ruble. The introduction of a national currency by any one country will be in accordance with jointly agreed rules. The main condition is not to harm our partners. We have agreed to place the emission of money under joint control, to carry out a uniform type of budget and

tax policy, and to coordinate our foreign economic activities and customs policy.

The agreement on the states guaranteeing each other free transit is of fundamental importance. In other words, they are to act together without quibbling about relations, arguing, or coming into conflict with each other.

We have made moves to meet our partners half way on the most important issue of the timescale for price liberalization, but it is up to you to resolve this issue. That is to say, we have agreed to introduce them not from 16 December as was agreed earlier, but from 2 January 1992. It has transpired that they were not prepared and they asked us most insistently to allow this. These were, of course, difficult decisions for me, especially after parliament's resolution, but it was essential for the proper coordination of our actions.

During the talks, our republics arrived at a shared opinion on an issue that is a concern, not only for the peoples of our country but for the whole world. The agreement envisages close cooperation by the countries of the Commonwealth in ensuring peace and security and their will to eliminate all nuclear weapons and also achieve universal and total disarmament. The Commonwealth of Independent States will provide for a unified military-strategic space and unity of the nuclear forces under single command.

The shared view is to create a defense alliance with a single command for strategic armed forces. This marks an end to the protracted debates about the future of the country's nuclear potential and the fate of the army.

Yesterday I had a meeting with the leadership of the Armed Forces and the commanders of military district, commanders of armies, and many divisional commanders. Active support was expressed for the positions of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the issues. The army is on the side of those who are building interstate relations on a new and democratic basis.

One special theme of the agreements reached is human rights. Full unanimity on this question was expressed. The citizens of the Commonwealth states enjoy on its territory the rights and liberties universally recognized as norms of international law. No national or other discrimination is tolerated within the community. The will of our states to facilitate the full-blooded development of the indigenous nations as well as national minorities has been sealed by the agreement.

Recognition of the principle of open borders for the citizens of our countries is the most important aspect. Speaking in general terms, during the Belarus talks a broad complex of the most important issues was settled. We have come out of a dead end and laid foundations for unification of states in action, not in words.

We wanted to consider the interests not only of the three republics but of all the possible future members of the community. I cannot agree that at its base lies some kind of ethnic Slavic principle. We have equal respect for peoples of different nationalities. It is open to new participants, first and foremost to all the former republics of the union.

A center—Minsk—has been chosen as a place for meetings between leaders, heads of state and government. It is not the capital of the Commonwealth; it is a place for the heads of state and government or some kind of working groups to get together. This does not mean that any structures which we might set up to coordinate have to be in Minsk, but—and this is very important—it does mean the end of speculation that Russia aspires to take the place of the union center and cherishes some kind of imperial ambitions. This is not and never has been so.

Esteemed people's deputies, attempts have been made over the past few days to cast doubt on the legality of the accords that have been reached. It is my view that in the situation that has come about it is simply immoral. With enormous difficulty the only possible formula for a comity of states, members of the former union, has, at long last, been found. It may well be that it is the last chance. To torpedo it at present is tantamount to entering into direct confrontation with those who made their choice, including at the Union referendum. It will inevitably doom people to new suffering; it will not only throw into chaos our states, which wish to live together, but will also pose a real threat to mankind.

We are in the fourth day of the existence of the signed treaty on the Commonwealth of Independent States, but a few conclusions can already be drawn. The documents signed in Belarus are arousing immense interest in the former republics of the union. Even those who, having proclaimed their independence, in fact withdrew from the Union, are expressing their approval, including Armenia, which has in written form preliminarily expressed its decision to join the Commonwealth.

Kyrgyzstan has given support. Arriving today for discussion of this matter will be a delegation from Moldova, headed by President Snegur. In the near future negotiations will start with the republics which want to become members of the Commonwealth. I believe that the Republic of Kazakhstan too will become a full member or a cofounder of the Commonwealth of Independent States—it was one of the initiators as long ago as in December of last year of such a decision. Today, precisely today, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian republics—five leaders of the republics—are discussing this matter in Askhabad, and by the end of the day their decision will be known.

Esteemed people's deputies: You will have to make probably one of most crucial decisions. The fate of the Commonwealth which has been set up, and first and foremost that of Russia, will depend on it to a large extent. I count on deputies' wisdom and their approach to matters of state and on the fact that the Supreme Soviet will adopt a truly historic decision of full value.

The draft decision of the Supreme Soviet on the ratification of the agreement on the Commonwealth has been submitted to you. Thank you.

Answers Parliament's Questions

LD1212114191 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0831 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Responses given by President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin to questions by the Supreme Soviet deputies at the 12 December Supreme Soviet session in Moscow—live]

[Text] [Khasbulatov] Thank you Boris Nikolayevich. [deputies applaud] Esteemed deputies, yes, Boris Nikolayevich will probably be able to reply to several questions. So if you do not mind, one question can be asked at each microphone. The first one please.

[Peruanskiy] Deputy Peruanskiy, Kazan. Boris Nikolayevich, it is said here that USSR norms cease to exist on the territory of the republics which have concluded the agreement. Does this also mean that the USSR Constitution ceases to exist? Incidentally, I would not regard this as a great loss. The second question: It is said here that USSR power structures also cease to exist. Well, it is usual practice for a resigning government to say....

[Khasbulatov, interrupting] Pardon me, do you have a question?

[Peruanskiy] Yes, I have already asked one. Here is the second one. It is said that the government carries on performing its functions until a new government is formed. In this case, the power structure ceases to exist from the moment of signing. What mechanisms will perform these tasks during this period?

[Yeltsin] I understand. First of all, the majority of Union power structures have already been abolished. This is the first thing. As for those which have remained or emerged, once again while discussing it with President Gorbachev yesterday—discussions now take place nearly every day, but yesterday it was already a peaceful one—we reached the following agreement: Unless the majority of states signs, joins this agreement on the commonwealth of the three states, those structures which are operating today will continue to do so.

[Peruanskiy] And as for the Constitution?

[Yelstin] As for the Constitution, there was no mention of it in the latest Novo-Ogarevo draft agreement.

[Peruanskiy] Thank you.

[Khasbulatov] Number two, please.

[Akhtyumov] Akhtyumov, Territorial Constituency 45: Boris Nikolayevich, the mass media have reported that before ratifying the agreement, the Ukrainian Parliament made amendments to it which were, it was reported, agreed by the Ukrainian president and by you. What are these amendments, if any?

[Yeltsin] On the whole these are not amendments, I would say, but observations of an editorial nature and they are not even being included, are not included, in the text of the agreement but appear simply as a supplement to the text of this agreement. The only article there—and they ask that we, too, agree to this—is something which we, indeed, did not think through, that this agreement has to be ratified by the Supreme Soviets. So to continue Article 15: This agreement comes into force following ratification by the Supreme Soviets of these states.

[Khasbulatov] Number three, please.

[Unidentified speaker] Information from Comrade Kosov, then me.

[Kosov] Boris Nikolayevich, I want to give some information on your observations. Yesterday we had official contact with the foreign ministers of the Ukraine and Belarus and reached full understanding on the official agreement, that these amendments passed by the Supreme Soviets of Ukraine and Belarus are of the nature of recommendations for further talks. As Boris Nikolayevich justly said, this is a basic document, the foundation stone of a building which has yet to be put up, and we agreed that various forms of agreement will be used—naturally arising from this basic agreement—in order to take account of the various observations, wishes, etc. As for ratification, Boris Nikolayevich just noted that this might be a small oversight, but we did discuss this matter at the level of experts, with the foreign ministers, and agreed that since Kazakhstan intends to join the founder-states as the very first member, there is room for manuever here, as they say, for the founders. Thank you.

[Yeltsin] The last time I spoke to Nazarbayev, the president of Kazakhstan, is just now. He is sufficiently confident regarding (?these) republics and their views, but some small things, perhaps, remain; not enough to undermine the agreement, I suggested, and he said no. Certain observations and a statement might be affixed to this agreement.

[Konstantinov] Konstantinov from the 105th okrug. Esteemed Boris Nikolayevich, you have correctly observed that the USSR Constitution is to all intents and purposes no longer in effect, but the RSFSR Constitution is in effect and the proposed agreement signed recently by the leaders of the three republics is manifestly constitutional in character. The introduction of relevant amendments to the RSFSR Constitution are called for, and in connection with this, I have a question. Does the Supreme Soviet have the authority to ratify the given agreement, and would it not be worth applying to the RSFSR Constitutional Court for guidance on this issue? Thank you.

[Khasbulatov] Perhaps this is a question for a lawyer. Sergey Mikhailovich Shakhray is here.

[Yeltsin] The Supreme Soviet does have the authority to ratify both treaties between the republics, and even more so an agreement between three republics, and you have already ratified more than one treaty. Therefore, this is a completely natural course, and if after the adoption of the decree on the ratification some alterations in the Constitution, for example, are called for, then this will be resolved in the proper legislative fashion.

[Khasbulatov] The final question: microphone number five.

[Gorelov] Gorelov, Moscow Oblast. Esteemed Boris Nikolayevich, returning to Article 11 about the application of the norms, among others, of the former Union in the three states, I have the following question: How do you envisage the regulation of those norms of our life which are today not regulated by Russian laws, for example the law on servicemen's pensions?

[Yeltsin] Which was the last law you mentioned?

[Konstantinov] The law on pensions for the military. At least these, to name a few. What mechanism will there be to set up the things which do not exist, which only exist on the union level? Thank you.

[Yeltsin] Our idea was as follows: We are taking into consideration the fact that many republics will join the agreement—and at the moment, talks are under way with the Baltics, among others, but they decided to work out their joint point of view first so we decided that it is not for the three of us to discuss this. We probably do need some coordinating bodies, but it would not be very ethical for we three to discuss them. When we know for sure how many states will be there—whether eight or 10 states will sign this agreement—then we will certainly get together and discuss these issues.

[Khasbulatov] Thank you.

Thanks Deputies for Approving Accord

LD1212131291 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1125 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Remarks by President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin following the vote by the 12 December Supreme Soviet session on the agreement on establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States—live]

[Text] Esteemed people's deputies: In our parliamentary practice—relating both to sessions of the Congress of People's Deputies and of the Supreme Soviet—and here today, perhaps, there are two compositions of the Supreme Soviet, to judge by the number of people's deputies—there are moments when these historic decisions are indeed adopted to the accompaniment of applause and a standing ovation. One might recall the first congress and subsequent congresses, one might recall a number of sessions of the Supreme Soviet and decisions made about the sovereignty of the Russian Federation and others.

I consider that the decision that has been made today represents the wisdom of the Supreme Soviet, the experience of the people's deputies, and the experience that has been built up over this year and a half, including that of those people's deputies and members of the Supreme Soviet who became permanent members of the Supreme Soviet following the rotation.

I would like to note that yes, there have been different points of view in the discussion today, but no doubt if we once again get into a situation in which we are saying only one and the same thing, if we only support one opinion, then once again we will roll down into the morass which we are beginning to scramble out of. Different points of view, therefore, and different pronouncements are a complete reality for parliament: it is a natural situation, so to speak, and evidently there is no point in overdramatizing this situation here, the more so when the composition of parliament is such that six were against and five abstained. I think that this means in practice that this has indeed been supported by the greatest majority of people's deputies.

I am grateful to the Supreme Soviet, to the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and to the chairman for today's act and decision. As president I promise, in fulfilling your will, to follow your decision on this agreement rigorously in continuing further talks, both with those who have ratified this agreement with a protocol and with those who are yet to sign this agreement with certain observations. I promise you this as president. I congratulate you on making this historic decision and I thank you for it. Thank you. [Applause]

Parliament Denounces 1922 Union Treaty

LD1212120191 Moscow TASS in English 1156 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 12 TASS—The Russian Parliament on Thursday [12 December] denounced by a majority of votes the treaty founding the Soviet Union adopted by the first Congress of Soviets on December 30, 1922.

Interrepublic Affairs

Yeltsin on Kazakhstan Joining Commonwealth

LD1112174891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1720 GMt 11 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Tamara Zamyatina]

[Text] Moscow, 11 Dec (TASS)—Russian President Boris Yeltsin thinks that yet another republic, Kazakhstan, will join the agreement on the Commonwealth of Independent States. He announced this today while receiving an award from Burda, a German publishing house. According to Boris Yeltsin, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan have unequivocally supported the agreement, while the leaders of Kazakhstan and the republics of Central Asia will meet in Dushanbe on 12 December,

where the issue of their attitude toward the agreement will be discussed. "If the issue is resolved positively, Boris Yeltsin said, I will fly to Alma-Ata on 14 December to sign these agreements together with the leaders of the Central Asian republics."

Yeltsin Comments on 'Breakdown' of Union

LD1112185491 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1700 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin met in Moscow today with the leaders of Russian parliamentary factions and groupings of deputies. He said it is naive to blame the leaders of the three states of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus for the breakdown of the Union, when eight of the 15 republics had already left the USSR.

The majority of those at the meeting with the RSFSR president approved the Minsk agreement. Sergey Baburin, coordinator of the Russia faction, expressed a dissenting view. He told journalists that he did not intend to reanimate the former Union, but he was in favor of federal relations between the peoples of the former USSR.

Burbulis on Commonwealth, Coup Rumors

LD1112164791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1535 GMT 11 Dec 91

[TASS diplomatic correspondent Andrey Pershin]

[Text] Moscow, 11 December (TASS)—"To the sacred question about with whom you can do business, it is now possible to answer distinctly and with dignity: With the independent state of Russia, which is implementing its reforms in unison with the republics that signed in Minsk on 8 December the agreement on forming a Commonwealth of Independent States." This was stated today by Gennadiy Burbulis, Russian Federation state secretary and first deputy premier of the Russian cabinet, before flying out on a foreign tour.

He told the press that over the next two days he will visit France and Belgium, where he will deliver personal messages from Russian President Boris Yeltsin to French President Francois Mitterrand, the leader of the EC Commission, and the Belgian prime minister. Gennadiy Burbulis commented that he would hold talks with a wide circle of Western politicians and business people during which he would explain the essence of the economic reforms in Russia and would demonstrate the whole "historical nature and promising aspect of the Minsk decisions." He added that above all he expects from the West understanding of the new situation that has taken shape in the former USSR.

Responding to numerous questions from journalists, the first vice premier of the Russian Government confirmed that both he and Boris Yeltsin held a conversation with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev during which the text of the agreement signed by the three republics was discussed. In the words of Gennadiy Burbulis, Nursultan Nazarbayev expressed a "serious intention to join the Commonwealth." There was discussion on the part of the Kazakhstan leader on supplementing a number of provisions of this document.

Journalists have asked Gennadiy Burbulis to comment on the information by the Moscow firm "MMM" which was leaked in the press today, according to which "an attempt is being planned to arrest the leaders of the RSFSR, the Ukraine, and Belarus with the aim of applying the brakes to the reforms and disrupting the process of creating the Commonwealth of Independent States." "It is difficult for me to comment on this, stated the first deputy vice premier of the Russian Government; we receive such threats practically every week and treat them accordingly." Speaking further about Boris Yeltsin's meeting today with the military district commanders of the former union, Gennadiy Burbulis stressed that "its results were mutually inspiring." According to him, "the plan of the common strategic defense program which was put forward in Minsk offers a solution to the current problems of the armed forces, who are getting a clear picture about their present and their future."

The Army is on the side of the people who have elected Boris Yeltsin their president, concluded Burbulis.

To a question on the possibility of a new putsch, about which St. Petersburg Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak spoke in Paris recently, Burbulis replied: "In France, I will be trying to convince them of something entirely different."

Briefs Press in Paris

LD1212053791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0359 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Text] Paris, 12 Dec (TASS)—By last night it had become absolutely clear that after several hours of pondering by the leaders of the majority of states, our Minsk initiative was approved in principle and that President Gorbachev's official reaction was corrected by the republics' sober view. This opinion was voiced by Gennadiy Burbulis, RSFSR secretary of state and first deputy chairman of the RSFSR Government, at Orly Airport, Paris, in conversation with Soviet journalists last night. He arrived here on a short visit.

The first deputy prime minister of Russia said that today's meeting between Yeltsin and Gorbachev had been more substantial than their first meeting, which had taken place after "the meeting of the three" in Belarus. Boris Nikolayevich once again confirmed our resoluteness and had the opportunity to clarify the arguments and forms of our practical constructive action program in a more detailed and concrete way. In G. Burbulis' words, Mikhail Gorbachev was concerned about the following problem: What will become of the Interstate Economic Committee and the USSR Supreme Soviet?

In connection with this, the Russian deputy prime minister spoke about his meetings with Ivan Silayev and his deputies, which had taken place on 11 December. We explained to each other the entire novelty of the situation and showed a sincere desire to preserve all those obligations which had been given to republics within the framework of the economic agreement at the time. At the same time we proposed the following approach: We will not preserve these structures artificially for the mere purpose of having them, whereas the states which form the commonwealth will review the very principle of forming them.

On the whole, according to the deputy head of the Russian Government—who referred to B. Yeltsin's appreciation here—Gorbachev's reaction was "attentive." G. Burbulis said further that Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev talked twice with Russian leaders yesterday and confirmed that we would be together and that he intended to join the accord. He had proposals and ideas regarding the wording of certain clauses, which we are prepared to discuss, he noted. We were certain that Kazakhstan would support us, and if for some reasons certain psychological and perhaps moral inconveniences occurred, God knows that we had not planned them, Burbulis said.

'Democratic Russia' Denies Opposing Commonwealth

LD1112192791 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1750 GMT 11 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] The Moscow city organization of the Movement for Democratic Russia requests that a refutation be given of information in yesterday's "Vesti" bulletin that the Democratic Russia Movement, together with Nikolay Travkin's party, protested yesterday against the Commonwealth of Independent States and came out in favor of preserving the former USSR. We refute, repent, and add that Democratic Russia will picket the White House tomorrow morning, demanding that the Russia-Ukraine-Belarus agreement be ratified.

Some news which has just come in: Academician Shatalin also speaks of his disagreement with Nikolay Travkin's policy. Stanislav Shatalin has spoken of his departure from the Democratic Party of Russia. This is Academician Shatalin's second departure from political parties in the past year. You can read about his reasons in tomorrow's KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA.

New Commonwealth Called 'Civilized Alternative'

PM1112165791 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 10 Dec 91 p 2

[S. Oganyan report: "Russian Government's News Conference: New Winds from the Old Square"]

[Text] Having not quite lived to see its 69th anniversary, the Soviet Union has collapsed. Henceforth 8 December will go down in the history of the Slav peoples of the former USSR as the day the Commonwealth of Independent States was formed. This was announced yesterday at a news conference held at the Russian Government's Press Center on Staraya Ploshchad.

Before it started, documents signed by S. Shushkevich, B. Yeltsin, and L. Kravchuk in Minsk were circulated among the journalists. They include: the agreement setting up the Commonwealth of Independent States; the statement by the heads of state of the Republic of Belarus, the RSFSR, and the Ukraine; and also the statement by the governments of these republics.

Opening the news conference, Russian Vice Premier G. Burbulis declared: We will not, I hope, keep going over and over the Minsk summit. Nevertheless, he devoted most of his speech to just this—without exaggeration—sensational event. What lies behind this agreement? Russia and the Ukraine were concerned with one question: What people need today in order to move according to the program of planned reforms. In this connection general problems were discussed. They are obvious to everyone, and there is no need to speak about them. The main problem is the conditions of power under which the consistent economic recovery can begin. The organizational, political, and legal forms in which the interests of the majority of the population of our states can be made of paramount importance in the government's activity. It was from this soil, the moderator emphasized, that the idea of a commonwealth of independent states came.

The Minsk meeting, G. Burbulis continued, was an attempt to eliminate the ambiguity and hypocrisy which have accumulated in our common home in recent years, and it was pleasant to note, Burbulis said, that we were quite unanimous in our starting positions. The decision adopted must be comprehended in depth because it will make it possible to begin the constructive work of creation.

Dwelling on the government's current work, Burbulis reported that it is being carried out on two planes. These are, above all, the mobilization of all existing reserves and resources to prevent an emergency food situation on the territory of Russia and in Moscow. He reported that the Ukraine and Belarus had reafffirmed their pledges and adopted additional ones for supplying the metropolitan region. It was also reported that the Russian Supreme Soviet had supported the president and the government's proposal for a new tax policy. This is very important. An alarming situation has taken shape in northern parts of Russia regarding the energy and fuel question. To put it simply, people are cold. In this connection it was emphasized that power is continuing to consolidate vertically.

Concerning the activity of the Interstate Economic Committee headed by I. Silayev, he said that its work will now be organized in a new way. In the next few days we

will make certain corrections to our participation in this organ and, naturally, to the work of the Union Supreme Soviet.

The journalists were also addressed by Russian Foreign Minister A. Kozyrev. The myths that, without a totalitarian center and its structures, the states which have been formed on one-sixth of the world's land area will run wild to such an extent that they will throw themselves at each other, have collapsed, he emphasized. In Minsk we found a civilized alternative to this confrontation.

Having reached prior agreement, the three presidents yesterday contacted U.S. President G. Bush after adopting the documents. On behalf of his colleagues, B. Yeltsin, who has developed a stable personal relationship with the U.S. President, talked with him. It was a very thorough conversation. We believe, A. Kozyrev reported, that the Belarussian Foreign Ministry, with whose help this conversation took place, will very soon make public the substance of the conversation.

Speaking of Bush's reaction to Yeltsin's report, he called it considered, constructive, and reflecting an understanding of the historically inevitable democratic processes taking place here. The crux of Yeltsin's reports was that a civilized commonwealth of independent states has been formed in place of the totalitarian state which threatened peace for 45 years and which bears tremendous responsibility for the Cold War. The Commonwealth takes a responsible approach to questions of international law—to human rights above all—and, most importantly, to the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.

When a journalist asked whether it had been suggested that Bush sign the three presidents' statement, Kozyrev replied that this, naturally, had not been Yeltsin's task, and the U.S. President was simply informed of the decision made. We expect a majority of the former union republics, A. Kozyrev said, to join our Commonwealth quite soon. We also cannot rule out the possibility that the new Commonwealth may also be joined by other democratic states which, it is true, according to the minister, continue to have a natural allergy to all kinds of unions that existed, founded on diktat.

Belarus

Chairman Says Others Want To Join Commonwealth

OW1212005991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1700 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The chairman of the Belarus parliament Stanislav Shushkevich has announced at Wedneday's [11 December] session of the republic's Supreme Soviet that he had talked on the telephone with the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan—Nursultan Nazarbayev and Ayaz Mutalibov—who expressed their wish to join the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Holds News Conference

PM1112114791 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 11 Dec 91 Union Edition p 2

[By correspondent N. Matukovskiy: "Creation of New Commonwealth Should Avert Tragedy"]

[Text] Minsk—For the first time since his return from the Belovezhskaya Forest, S. Shushkevich, chairman of the Belarus Supreme Soviet, met with journalists from the central and local press.

Realizing that the collapse of the Union threatens the country's peoples with many troubles, we decided to avert a tragedy by creating a more improved form of the Union—a Commonwealth of Independent States. Some politicians have stated that they cannot conceive of the Union without the Ukraine. But we proposed the following option whereby the Ukraine, having chosen the path of independence, became a member of the Commonwealth. We could not sit any longer with folded arms and watch dangerous processes growing rapidly. At the State Council, where we are often invited, we only sit and listen to what the president says, but he scarcely listens to what we say. Initially the idea of the "troika" went no further than economic problems, S. Shushkevich said, but when we set about discussing them we realized that we could not manage without resolving political questions. We wanted to warn immediately against an incorrect understanding of the nature of the Commonwealth. It is not based on national, ethnic considerations. There are 6,000 ethnic groups in the world but that does not mean there should be 6,000 states. We proceeded primarily from economic considerations. Belarus, the Ukraine, and Russia border on each other, and any economic action in one republic has immediate repercussions in another. By concluding the agreement, Stanislav Shushkevich said, we removed very many alarming questions. For instance, the questions of our own currencies and the liberalization of prices, and in the future there may be talk of joining the single European monetary unit.

We approached each point of the agreement with extreme caution and thought. Every article had four or five drafts. We sought to provide in the agreement for everything and above all to observe the interests of man, irrespective of his nationality.

Answering the question of what is his attitude toward Gorbachev's idea of holding a congress of people's deputies, Stanislav Stanislavovich replied:

"I personally am in favor of holding a Congress which would dot all the 'i's.' But I fear that it is no longer possible to convene it, the deputies from the Ukraine and Belarus will not go to the congress, nor will some Russian deputies. And later, let us be frank. The president himself buried the idea of a Congress in the recent past. There is scarcely any point in convening a Congress to retain presidential power."

"Why will the coordination center be in Minsk and not in Moscow?"

"For two reasons. The first is that in Moscow, abolished and unnecessary structures are immediately reborn under various new signboards. We were afraid that these structures would suppress us. The second reason is that we were seeking a quieter, calmer, and relatively small city. Everyone agreed on Minsk."

"How do you conceive the association of other states to the Commonwealth?"

"I am empowered to make proposals to all subjects of the former Union and not only to 'subjects.' For instance, I sent invitations to the Baltic countries, and Armenia has already stated it is prepared to associate itself to us. I am sure that many will come to us, because it seems to us that we have found the only correct path for emerging from the impasse. After all we are calling for a Commonwealth, without affecting the sovereignty and independence of other states."

"What did you talk about with M. Gorbachev when you telephoned him from Belovezhskaya Forest?"

"It was a difficult talk. I realized that the president's entourage had given him in many ways incorrect information; he was not informed of several important issues. There is no other way to explain his position or his forecast regarding the future of Ukraine."

"Why did you not travel to Moscow?"

"We empowered Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin to expound our unanimous common position to the president. I shall go when our parliament approves the agreement on the Commonwealth."

"And you are confident it will approve it?"

"I have no doubt. We have sensible people, although they have to decide..."

"Does your agreement on the Commonwealth comply with legal norms?"

"It does. We, Russia, the Ukraine, and Belarus, were the founders of the 1922 Union (the Transcaucasus republic has not existed for a long time) and we have the right to raise the question of its dissolution. And the Constitution... The Constitution has already become obsolete in many respects; we do not have the Baltic countries, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, or Azerbaijan. We must consider realities.

Popular Front Leader Criticizes Yeltsin

LD1112181991 Moscow TASS in English 1441 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By correspondent Vyacheslav Zenkovich]

[Text] Minsk December 11 TASS—Leader of the Belorussian Popular Front blasted Russian President Boris Yeltsin for attempts "to create a new Russian empire".

Zenon Pozdnyak, whose organisation stands for complete Belorussian independence, said the new commonwealth should be viewed as a step towards genuine sovereignty of his republic, and not a means of reviving the Russian empire.

He blasted Yeltsin as a "perfidious politician", and said the Belorussian Government acted in Minsk like "flunkies". Pozdnyak said he categorically objects the creation of any commonwealth offices in Minsk.

Defense Chief: No Hurry Over Nuclear Arms

LD1112193391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1726 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By BELTA-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Minsk, 11 Dec (TASS)—"I think that we should not be in any hurry to hand over nuclear weapons deployed on the territory of the republic to anybody," Lieutenant General Petr Chausov told a session of the Supreme Soviet. Parliament today confirmed him as minister for defense affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Petr Chausov, 52, was born in Gomel Oblast and educated at the Minsk "Suvorov" Academy. He served in Afghanistan. Until August of this year he was chief of staff of the Baltic Military District. In the last few months he has been USSR first deputy chief of civil defense.

According to the general, if nuclear warheads are kept on Belarus territory, it will not hinder the republic's gradual transition to the status of a neutral, nuclear-free power. A supporter of introducing a contractual system of army service, Petr Chausov proposes that the period of service should be cut to 18 months and that alternative service be introduced. He also wants an immediate and strict stocktaking of all military property located in Belarus and a tightening up of controls over the use of land by the military.

PRAVDA Views Economic Side of Russia Ties

PM1012130191 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 9 Dec 91 p 1

[By correspondents O. Stepanenko and A. Ulitenok: "What Will We Build on the Ruins?"]

[Text] As a result of talks in Minsk between B. Yeltsin, president of Russia, and S. Shushkevich, chairman of the Belarus Supreme Soviet, a number of important documents have been signed. They are a communique on the results of the talks between the official delegations of the Republic of Belarus and the RSFSR, an agreement on the principles of trade and economic cooperation between the two republics, and a joint statement by their leaders.

The speeches by the participants in the Russia-Belarus bilateral meeting and materials issued to journalists placed emphasis on the economy. They point out the objective value of preserving the single economic area, which is bound together by thousands of vital blood vessels and nerves.

For example, the RSFSR supplies Belarus with oil, natural gas, coal, rolled ferrous metal, nonferrous metals, commercial lumber and sawn timber, chemical products, raw materials for the chemical industry, cement, machines and equipment, fish and fish products, vegetables, and consumer goods.

Belarus supplies the RSFSR with trucks, tractors, tractor trailers, elevators, metal-cutting machine tools, bearings, electric motors, computer equipment and spares, man-made and synthetic yarns and fibers, tires, flax fiber, potatoes, meat and dairy produce, and consumer goods.

The RSFSR accounts for 64 percent of the total volume of output imported into Belarus and Belarus exports approximately the same amount of its output to Russia. Essentially this is a single economic organism, and any disruption to it, no matter how slight, threatens not just calamity but catastrophe to many thousands of people.

The immediate future is even more alarming. Whereas last year Belarus refined around 40 million tonnes of oil, under the draft intergovernmental agreement for 1992 only 25 million tonnes (the state order) have been allocated, and a quota is included for purchasing 5 million tonnes by direct contracts. Supplies of paper pulp from Russia are planned to be almost halved. The question of deliveries of precious metals has not been resolved.

Russia is suffering, too. For example, a single electronic industry production association, "Monolit," supplies output to 1,500 Russian enterprises. The disruption of deliveries is undermining the production of television sets, radio receivers, tape recorders, and other radioelectronic equipment in the RSFSR. It is the same in other sectors.

The communique on the results of the talks between official delegations of the Republic of Belarus and the RSFSR—the main political document of the bilateral meeting—should be viewed as an attempt to avert the processes of disintegration.

The communique's key phrases show that even for Russia and Belarus the creation of a fully interconnected and integrated organism is no longer being raised as an issue. As Yeltsin stated, the idea of federation and the idea of a semi-confederation are now losing ground. And that is why the main task, in his words, is to find points of cooperation and collaboration—primarily, of course, in the most vitally important sphere of the economy, to which a special agreement is dedicated. The essence of the agreement is to pursue trade and economic mutual relations between the two republics within the framework of an economic community based on mutual benefit.

Meanwhile we can say that the attitude to those relations, like the attitude to bilateral action itself, is mixed here in the Republic of Belarus. The Belorussian people want the closest unity not only with Russia but also with the other former republics of the former USSR. In the March referendum the overwhelming majority of them voted for the preservation of the USSR.

While supporting the sound ideas of unification, many are convinced that it is necessary to determine more precisely the form and principles of that unification. They are subjecting Yeltsin's economic concept and program above all to uncompromising criticism.

Those who oppose the rapprochement of Belarus and Russia here have seized on the weakness of the Russian leadership's economic program. After B. Yeltsin's speech in the Belorussian parliament, where he tried to justify the price liberalization policy, the opposition here immediately organized a news conference.

In view of the omissions and mistakes by the Union and Russian leaders who included in the economic concept of perestroyka something more terrible than a nuclear bomb—the breakdown of interests between people, collectives, regions, and republics—opposition leader Z. Poznyak concludes: Belarus must take the path of an independent state with its own currency, army, and other attributes. In short, it must completely break away from Russia.

The meeting between the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and the Ukraine in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha is taking place behind closed doors.

UNESCO Signs Cooperation Memorandum

LD1012052291 Moscow TASS in English 2130 GMT 9 Dec 91

[By BELTA correspondent Tatyana Khryapina]

[Text] Minsk December 9 TASS—UNESCO has signed a memorandum on cooperation with Belorussia to help the Republic clean up the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster and expand cultural and educational ties.

The document was signed by the Belorussian Government and UNESCO Director-General Federico Major Saragosa, who is in Minsk on an official visit.

The UNESCO secretariat will help carry out the UNESCO-Chernobyl programme, restore the Mirskiy Castle in Belorussia and search for the cross of Yefrosinya Polotskaya to return this historic relic to the Republic.

The parties also agreed to develop contacts in education, including in computerisation, training personnel and teaching national and foreign languages.

Moldova

President To Leave for Talks With Yeltsin

LD1112182491 Moscow TASS in English 1511 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By correspondent Fyodor Angeli]

[Text] Kishinev December 11 TASS—Moldavian President Mircea Snegur is planning to discuss the Minsk agreement with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and later with the Ukrainian and Belorussian leaders, TASS learned from reliable sources.

Snegur is leaving for Moscow on Thursday [12 December].

Snegur Pledges 'Total Independence'

AU1112185291 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1741 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Bucharest ROMPRES, 11/12/1991—On Tuesday [10 December] the headquarters of the Government of the Republic of Moldova hosted the press conference of the new president—elected during the December 8 election—Mircea Ion Snegur. On the occasion President Snegur emphasised that those elections represented in fact "a victory of the people" which proved "it is a moderate, peace-loving people, a people which showed it has a higher conscience than those having intended to boycott the elections." In the president's opinion this political act is considered as a guarantee of the future of the Republic and of the independence proclaimed by the Parliament.

President Mircea Snegur specified on this occasion, too that he would continue to develop the economic and cultural collaboration with Romania only in conditions of total independence of the Republic of Moldova.

Parliament Cancels Regional Election Results

OW1212065091 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2044 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The parliament of Moldova declared null and void on Dec 11 the results of presidential elections in the Dnestr region and Gagauz republic.

The same resolution denies the legality of the referenda held in those areas to proclaim them independent. It emphasizes that "the elections were held in breach of the present law by exerting pressure on voters from illegal public institutions". The elections were held in breach of the present law by exerting pressure on voters from illegal public institutions". The elections and referenda in the above regions are described as "a claim on Moldova's territorial integrity".

Foreign Ministry Condemns 'Separatist' Moves

AU0712152391 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1302 GMT 7 Dec 91

[Text] Chisinau [Kishinev] ROMPRES, 7/12/1991—The MOLDOVA PRES newscast a statement by the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Moldova, which shows: Separatist leaders in the so-called Dnestr and Gagauz Republics rendered useless the activity of the conciliation commission created with the help of People's Deputies from the Russian Federation.

The ever more active implication of the military in the Soviet Army in tensing the atmosphere of psychic and moral terror and of threats to the population is a reason for serious concern. There are proofs that the army took direct part in arming illegal groupings that, under the pretext of surveying the proper organization and course of the elections, resorted to the use and threat of force, blocking roads and conducting raids in the villages whose inhabitants refused to take part in the elections, the communique shows.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova states that the aforesaid actions taken by separatist forces, the involvement in these actions of the military in the units of the Soviet Army, the creation and employment of illegal armed groupings are a most serious violation of the unanimously acknowledged principles and norms of international law, as enshrined in the UN Charter, in international pacts on human rights, in the Paris Charter for a New Europe and in the documents that followed the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, leading to an extreme aggravation of the sociopolitical situation in the Republic. Such actions may have the most dramatic of consequences.

The Foreign Ministry reiterates the firm determination of the leadership of the Republic of Moldova to observe and fulfill all its commitments relative to national minorities and persons belonging to those minorities, in full accord with CSCE documents.

Economic Agreement Signed With Latvia

OW1112021791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1420 GMT 10 Dec 91

[From "Bulletin 2"; transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On December 10th in Kishinev an agreement on trade and economic cooperation for 1992 was signed by the governments of the Republic of Moldova and the Latvian Republic. The agreement was signed by the Prime Minister of Moldova, Valeriu Muravski, and the chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian Republic, Ivars Godmanis. Godmanis is in Moldova on an official business trip.

'Threat of Bloodshed' After Police Ruling

LD1112060391 Moscow TASS in English 1315 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Text] Bendery, Moldavia December 10 TASS—A real threat of bloodshed emerged in the city of Bendery in Moldavia after the city council ruled that the local police should be subordinate to the Dnestr authorities instead of the republican ones. The city council acted in accordance with a decree of the Dnestr president, elected on December 1. Moldavian authorities declared the election null and void.

After the Bendery police said they would not carry out the order, sixty Dnestr militants armed with submachine-guns arrived at the station late on Monday [9 December] to force them out. But Moldavian residents of the nearby Varnitsa settlement came to support the police after an appeal broadcast on Moldavian radio.

To avoid possible bloodshed, Bendery Mayor Vyacheslav Kogut said the police dispute would be settled on December 10. Varnitsa residents guarded the police station through the night.

The Moldavian Interior Ministry press centre said no incidents were reported in Bendery last night.

Ukraine

Republic Rejects Emergency Congress Session

LD1112190591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1752 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By UKRINFORM correspondents Viktor Demidenko and Mikhail Melnik]

[Text] Kiev, 11 Dec (TASS)—The Ukrainian Supreme Soviet today called on union members of parliament representing the republic not to take part in the proceedings of an emergency session of the country's Congress of People's Deputies, if one is convened.

The Ukrainian parliament based this decision on the fact that on 1 December the people of the republic approved by an overwhelming majority the document declaring

the independence of the Ukraine, thus demonstrating their wish to build an independent state. The very fact that the USSR has ceased to exist—as was noted by Belarus, the Ukraine, and Russia in the agreement adopted by them on 8 December—was also taken into account.

Kravchuk Comments on Commonwealth

PM1112154191 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 11 Dec 91 First Edition p 1

[Correspondent Colonel A. Polyakov report under "Direct Line" rubric: "Kravchuk: Ukraine Has Made Final Choice"]

[Text] Kiev, 10 Dec—Ukrainian President L. Kravchuk has held a news conference for Soviet and foreign journalists on the results of the Brest meeting. He read out in full the statement and agreement of "the three" on the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States. The president repeatedly emphasized that independent Ukraine advocates precisely a commonwealth of equal states and that it will not sign any treaty that proposes any coordinating center above the republics. He said that the delegations arrived in Minsk only with their own ideas and plans, and the final document came into being quickly and in a concerted manner because there was no "log" called the center lying across the road. Kravchuk repeatedly pointed out that no one must think that a closed union of three Slav powers has been created. The three largest republics took the initiative because they were the basis of the Soviet Union in 1922 and have unanimously made the only correct decision under the very grave conditions of economic disintegration today.

Answering a question about the place of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the central structures, and USSR President M. Gorbachev personally, Kravchuk pointed out that the republics' leaders did not discuss this question.

The chief thing now, the Ukrainian president said, is to ensure political stability and embark on radical economic reform. The Ukraine and Belarus will implement it simultaneously with Russia, but, to ensure social protection before the price liberalization, Russia must print 16 billion paper rubles for the Ukraine in January 1992 alone. The creation of the Ukraine's own currency is being deferred at present, but it intends to protect itself with coupons. There will not be a unified banking system among the republics.

Kravchuk declared that the leaders of the three republics advocated a unified command of the military-strategic forces, but the so-called "black bags" for the command and control [upravleniye] of possible nuclear strikes will be produced in several copies, so that the republics can control [kontrolirovat] the nuclear forces. In conclusion, citing numerical data, Kravchuk asked the journalists to report that, contrary to rumors, the Ukraine is fulfilling contract deliveries of meat and dairy products both to Russia as a whole and to Moscow.

On Gorbachev's Fate

PM1112160991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 11 Dec 91 Union Edition p 2

[By correspondent S. Tsikora: "On M. Gorbachev's Future and Muscovites' New Year Table; Leonid Kravchuk's Press Conference"]

[Text] Kiev—Journalists wondered whether there had been a discussion of the question of the further fate of the post of USSR president after the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, to which L. Kravchuk replied as follows:

"That is not our problem so there was no talk of it in Belovezhskaya Forest. We are not empowered to dismiss anyone. That question—particularly if it is a case of the post of president—is decided by each person independently, proceeding from specific circumstances."

L. Kravchuk was also asked a question about the possibility of the USSR president using strong-arm methods to restore the former Union. Answering the question, the Ukrainian president said that strong-arm methods are not M. Gorbachev's element. I have known Mikhail Sergeyevich for a long time; he will act within the framework of the Constitution and democratic norms. I do not think that toward the end of his career he will want to damage his reputation as a democrat.

At the news conference a fundamentally new approach was announced toward the nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus, the RSFSR, and the Ukraine. The heads of the three states agreed that with the creation of the commonwealth, control over the nuclear potential should be toughened. An agreement in principle has been reached between the leaderships of the three countries that the use of nuclear power will henceforth become possible only with the consent of the three states and the simultaneous pressing of three launch buttons by the leaders of these republics. In other words, the degree of control over nuclear weapons will be toughened three times over.

It was particularly emphasized that in forming the commonwealth the heads of the three states were acting strictly in accordance with the laws of their republics. We want to halt the process of disintegration taking place today under the leadership of the "glorious" center. Everyone should know that, because there will be masters, L. Kravchuk said, who will lay the blame on us, saying that we have destroyed the Union. On the contrary, we have pooled the efforts of the three states to take the situation under control and to prevent all structures from disintegrating before our eyes.

At the end of the news conference the journalists were issued with the official documents on deliveries of food from Ukraine to Russia. Recently passions have become heated around this issue, and some people would very much like to bring the two peoples into conflict and sow the seeds of grievance and distrust between them. In

actual fact the picture of food deliveries looks like this. Over the first 11 months of this year Ukraine sent Moscow 175,000 tonnes of meat and meat products (96.2 percent of the plan), 295,200 tonnes of sugar (83.3 percent), and 43,500 tonnes of vegetable oil (103.6 percent).

Prime Minister V. Fokin reported that in connection with the critical food situation in Moscow the republic's government, despite considerable difficulties in supplying food to the population of Ukraine, "had been seeking an opportunity to met the Russian Government's request and to deliver the indicated quantity of food to Moscow by the end of this year." It is a case of 52,000 tonnes of sugar, 1,500 tonnes of vegetable oil, and 2,000 tonnes of meat. Unless all this is quietly removed from Russian bases, Moscow will not greet the New Year with an empty festive table.

On 10 December the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet submitted for discussion and ratification by parliament the agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

IZVESTIYA Views Republic's Neutrality

PM1012160391 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 9 Dec 91 Union Edition p 3

[G. Deynichenko report: "Ukrainian Neutrality: Pluses and Minuses"]

[Text] "The Ukraine, the latest major player in the world arena, has taken rapid and resolute steps with the aim of convincing the world that it intends to become 'neutral and nuclear-free' as quickly as possible." This passage opens a report published by the LOS ANGELES TIMES. The words "neutral and nuclear-free" are in inverted commas as if this was a quotation, but there is no reference to the source. The report is headlined "Ukraine Declares Its Neutrality."

It is quite probable that these concepts were actually voiced at one of the news conferences the day after the Ukraine gained its independence. It is also quite likely that journalists, carried away by the new country's nuclear status problem, did not insist on precision being introduced into the first part of the statement. There has been no elaboration on the subject, although Ukrainian Foreign Minister A. Zlenko did speak about the new state's nonparticipation in military blocs.

It stands to reason that the mere fact of nonparticipation in a military alliance is not the same as having the status of a neutral state, although this is one of the most important elements. However, it can be assumed that the Ukraine, which is starting to shape its own foreign policy, is indeed examining the policy of neutrality, among other alternatives. If this policy wins, then all historical and legal precedents will be cancelled out: Never before has there been a large and powerful state like the Ukraine among the states that have declared neutrality for one reason or another (in this case it is not a question of temporary neutrality for the duration of possible military action: That is quite a different matter).

In a country whose economy has been ruined by excessive and unjustifiable military expenditure (and the Ukraine, being part of our former Union, shouldered a large proportion of this), the idea of neutrality can and evidently will be popular. The rejection of all military alliances and of commitments of a military nature does not in any way diminish a country's prestige, and neutral status enables a country to successfully carry out the most complex diplomatic tasks and play a constructive role in the strengthening of international peace and security. The total of all this promises great advantages both for society as a whole and for each and every citizen. Admittedly, a fairly lengthy path has to be traversed in order to do this. Neutrality is not acquired all at once, and its implementation is known to require expenditure—for example, in abolishing military bases, even those that now belong to a foreign state.

When implementing the idea of neutrality, it must not be forgotten that it entails not only a broad range of wonderful advantages, but also some fairly difficult obligations. Ultimately, neutrality is a well-known restriction on the sovereignty of foreign policy. A neutral state is constrained by its status in its choice of partners and courses of action in the international arena. Switzerland, for example, despite its high standing in the world, refuses to join the United Nations. The Austrian Government was until recently forced to take into account forces in its country which believed that neutrality was incompatible with plans to join the "Common Market."

Is the Ukraine, which has only just become genuinely independent and sovereign, ready for this kind of self-restriction? In the future, maybe, but what about now? If I lived in Kiev, this would not be to my liking. After all, even in world markets you have to behave cautiously. Even now the Swedes are reproached for having traded with Germany during the war.

Finally, the emergence in the east of Europe of not just a major new state but also a neutral one would radically change the situation on the continent and create a fairly dangerous geopolitical vacuum. The states that would like to build their foreign policy with a strong Ukraine as a prop will start looking for allies in completely different lands. Some of Ukraine's neighbors will acquire weightier influence. During the next polarization of forces on the continent (and this cannot be ruled out) neutral Ukraine itself will turn into a "gray area," into the object of a political game between possible rivals. Does the Ukraine deserve such a fate?

The only comfort in such a situation is the fact that neutral status does not by any means contradict the idea of strong defense, and maybe it presupposes the presence of powerful armed forces, which Sweden, Switzerland, and Finland all have. But the only thing is that this is expensive. Would it not be simpler to be guided by the famous three non-nuclear principles and live under the

"nuclear umbrella" of a defense alliance with its neighbors? Western geopoliticians are evidently speaking in vain about the fact that the states emerging in the space of our former Union should think about something along NATO lines to preserve the balance of forces and to reliably defend their strategic interests.

There is obviously no single method of ensuring security for each of the sovereign republics beyond the framework of a confederation, or if the plans for the political union that Gorbachev is concerned about are not implemented. Can the Ukraine choose the path of neutrality given the prevailing circumstances? Undoubtedly. The determination of foreign policy is its sovereign right. But the people's right to demand that the country's leadership reflect deeply on all the possible and impossible consequences of its choice is equally inalienable. A country like the Ukraine cannot afford to make a mistake in such a responsible sphere as foreign policy.

Need for Alliance With Russia Argued

PM0612145791 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 5 Dec 91 First Edition p 1

[Vladimir Kuznechevskiy "commentary": "Very Fateful First Sunday in December"]

[Text] Our times are rich in historic events. But last Sunday, 1 December, will by all accounts occupy a special place among them. On that day by the will of the population of the Ukraine, the centuries-old desire of the Ukrainian people to have their own statehood finally bore fruit. Boris Yeltsin and George Bush were the first to hail the emergence on the world political map of a new independent state following the official announcement of the results of the nationwide referendum and the election of the Ukrainian president.

The fact that this is the largest state on the European continent, and occupies fourth place in terms of population (over 52 million people), and is one of the richest in its natural and economic resources—all this in itself makes Ukraine's declaration of its independence a major historic event. But that is not the only point. On 1 December, the Ukraine's population decisively rejected the Novo-Ogarevo process of reconstructing the Soviet Union in any form. By canceling out the sly 17 March referendum—which was constituted and carried out by cunning wise men in the Kremlin like A. Lukyanov—with its decision, the multiethnic Ukrainian population practically sealed the fate of M. Gorbachev as USSR president. Following the events of 1 December it is impossible to continue this process of (supposedly) dressing this naked king together with his latest creation—the Supreme Soviet of no one knows what kind of Union—any more.

By giving strong support to the aspirations of Yeltsin's Russia, the Ukraine will no longer tolerate the functioning over it of such Union structures as the Interstate Economic Committee, the Ministry of External Relations, the Interrepublic Security Service, the Central Intelligence Service, and the Union Ministry of Defense, which frame the existence of the USSR president, in whatever soft and coordinating clothes they may array themselves. By all accounts, the leaders of these structures will leave the political scene together with the man who created them. The situation has changed radically. Whereas before 1 December, Gorbachev, who personified the USSR, had Russia in the person of Yeltsin as practically the only opponent of his efforts. Yeltsin's arms and legs were tied in the Russian Supreme Soviet and at congresses by the RSFSR peoples' deputies in the party nomenklatura, and he was often forced to pursue an extremely cautious line, even retreat from what he had previously announced.

Now Ukrainian President L. Kravchuk, who is in a far more resolute frame of mind, is speaking out against the aforesaid Union structures. His Ukrainian parliament, unlike the Russian parliament, is pushing for more resolute confrontation with the USSR president and his entourage. If Yeltsin and Kravchuk join forces, the Union center will not be able to endure the struggle for its survival. Certain objective circumstances are pushing the Ukraine toward contacts and close ties with Russia. After all, Kiev has yet to come up against the problems of the desire for independence of Transcarpathia, Lvov, Ivano-Frankovsk, Odessa, and the Crimea following the present euphoria of victory. It will still have to work out its relations with the republics of Dnestr and Gagauzia which, in the absence of the USSR (or the Union of Sovereign States) will be forced to seek their own international status and so on. Kiev also has yet to sort out mutual relations with states such as Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. So far the only thing that has happened is that in the past few days, the Romanian parliament has announced its nonrecognition of the results of the referendum in "non-Ukrainian lands"—North Bucovina, Khotina, and South Bessarabia. To confirm this, a National Unification Council was created 2 December in Romania which 27 deputies from the Republic of Moldova Parliament have already joined, and branches of this council will open in the near future in Kishinev, Chernovtsy, and Izmail.

Earlier when the superpower that was the USSR existed, it did not occur to anyone to make territorial claims against the Ukraine. Now it is another matter. In a while Kiev will evidently have occasion to recall that in the 20th century and before, Ukrainian lands were seized by European powers. After all Bogdan Khmelnitskiy swung toward Russia in January 1654 under pressure of circumstances: Necessity forced him to do so. In other words, the Ukraine's alliance with Russia has a long-standing objective basis which is not going to disappear in the 21st century. All this will be both continued and developed.

Against the background of the thunderous phenomenon of the Ukrainian referendum, the election of the president of Kazakhstan went by relatively unnoticed. Maybe the reason for this was the fact that the leadership of Kazakhstan did not consider it possible to raise the

question of independence point blank, bearing in mind that the ethnic Kazakh inhabitants in this republic amount to only around 44 percent, and around 40 percent are Russians, plus around 15 percent of other Russian-speaking ethnic minorities. It is not known how these 55 percent of the population would behave if they were directly faced with the question: Do you want to break with Moscow for good? The consequences of the conflict between the Kazakh nationalists and the Cossacks who gathered for a congress in Uralsk are still fresh in people's minds. One way or another this question was not raised, and Nursultan Nazarbayev was elected president of Kazakhstan with almost 100 percent support (99.88 percent of the voters participating in the elections voted for him). But, judging by his first news conference following the elections, even Nazarbayev is well aware of the fact that following the referendum in the Ukraine there is scarcely any point in talking about reviving the Novo-Ogarevo process.

Since 1 December it is becoming completely clear that the old Union personified by Gorbachev and his closest aides is receding into history. The process of creating a completely new formation—the Union of Equals—is on the threshold, where, to use the terminology of the popular British anti-utopist George Orwell, no one will any longer be able to be "more equal than others."

Withdrawal of Troops to Republic Stops

LD0812084291 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 0254 GMT 7 Dec 91

[From the "Military News" section]

[Text]—Withdrawal of Soviet divisions from Germany and Poland to Ukraine has stopped, informs Kiev Military District Headquarters officials. Military units now stationed abroad will be brought back to Russia. Some military experts believe that this decision was taken because Ukraine refused to accept additional military contingence. On the other hand, the Russian leadership is reluctant to send heavily armed military units to the sovereign Ukraine. It has emerged that the construction companies financed by Germany which have been building a military settlement in Krivoy Rog are giving up construction mid-way.

Cuba Explores Opportunities for Cooperation

OW1112021291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1420 GMT 10 Dec 91

[From "Bulletin 2"; transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] According to sources said to be close to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, Cuba has expressed, via unofficial channels, its readiness for cooperation with the independent Ukraine. The Cuban leader Fidel Castro told a visiting delegation of Ukrainian parliamentarians that he would be ready to "mitigate" his regime in the near future, so that the Ukraine could never be accused of cooperation with totalitarian forces. Evidently, Cuba's interest in the Ukraine stems from the fact that Ukrainian plants used to process Cuban sugar cane into sugar. At present, the ex-USSR no longer purchases sugar cane from Cuba.

According to some Ukrainian MPs [members of parliament], the Cuban consul in Kiev, too, has been probing the opportunities for possible cooperation with the Ukraine.

Armenia

Economic Agreement Signed With Russia

NC1212064191 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 5 Dec 91

[Text] Yerevan 5 Dec (ARMENPRES)—A cooperation agreement between the Armenian Republic and the RSFSR was signed at the Russian Government house on 3 December.

Yegor Gaydar, first deputy prime minister of Russia, signed the agreement on Russia's behalf. Grant Bagratyan, first deputy prime minister, signed for the Armenian side.

This was the seventh agreement Russia has signed with the former Union republics. Bagratyan noted that "this is the first major economic agreement Armenia has signed with another state since its independence."

Economic Agreement for 1992 Signed With Ukraine

NC1212070491 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1730 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Text] As reported, a trade and economic agreement for 1992 was signed between Ukraine and Armenia in Kiev a few days ago. The agreement specifies the list and volume of the most important products the republics will supply each other. These guidelines can be altered or supplemented only by mutual agreement. According to the agreement the sides will provide comprehensive assistance and create the necessary conditions for establishing and strengthening direct trade and economic ties and to develop cooperation in production.

Both sides expressed readiness to assist each other in organizing scientific, technical, and joint venture activities, including the establishment of joint ventures and exchange of scientific data.

Latvian Delegation Arrives, Signs Agreement

NC1212070391 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1730 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Text] A Latvian Government delegation lead by Latvian Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis arrived in Yerevan on 7 December.

Armenia's Gagik Arutyunyan, vice president and prime minister, received Godmanis. Issues of mutual interest were discussed in ensuing talks. The issues dealt with the republics' various political and economic (?problems).

After the meeting, an official signing ceremony was held. The agreement detailed trade and economic cooperation between the governments of the Armenian and Latvian Republics for 1992-95. Arutyunyan signed the agreement on Armenia's behalf and Godmanis signed it for Latvia.

The Latvian delegation left Yerevan for Baku on the same day.

Officers Protest Reassignment, Discharge

NC1112201291 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Fifty servicemen from No. 18920 Army unit at Stepanakert have signed a cable to Defense Minister Marshal Shaposhnikov. In it they point out that in their unit the careers of only the Armenian officers and warrant officers are under review. These officers have been told they can take up posts elsewhere or leave the armed forces.

The aim and consequences of such review are obvious. It needs to be stated that the change in the leadership of the Defense Ministry has had little affect on the style and method of work of the Defense Ministry's representatives in various localities.

Azerbaijan

State Council Discusses Minsk Agreement

LD1112151891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1301 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Baku, 11 Dec AZERINFORM-TASS—The idea of creating a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) "may be taken positively, provided it does not exclude the processes of gaining sovereignty and acquiring independence." The position by Azerbaijan with regard to the Minsk agreement was expressed at the extraordinary session of the sitting of the State Council of the republic, the AZERINFORM agency reported today.

At the sitting, which was chaired by Ayaz Mutalibov, president of Azerbaijan, it was stressed that "questions connected with the form of the new commonwealth, the principles of its formation, and the mutual relations of the CIS member states should be worked on." The State Council of Azerbaijan thinks that the agreement signed in Minsk demands thorough study, and if necessary, special discussion in the Supreme Soviet of the republic.

NKAO Seeks Membership in Commonwealth

LD1212122691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1140 GMT 12 Dec 91

[By correspondent Vadim Byrkin]

[Text] Moscow, 12 Dec (TASS)—The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast [NKAO], which declared its status as an independent republic following the referendum on 10 December, submitted an application today for acceptance into the Commonwealth of Independent States.

A message to this effect has been sent to the presidents of Belarus, Russia, and the Ukraine by Leonard Petrosyan,

chairman of the Executive Committee of the proclaimed NKAO republic. He stated this in a telephone conversation with a TASS correspondent.

Republic Opposes Special Deputies' Congress

LD1112185691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1756 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Baku, 11 Dec (AZERINFORM-TASS)—The National Council of the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet today assessed the idea of the convocation of an extraordinary congress of USSR People's Deputies as "not in keeping with current political realities."

The National Council understands this proposal as "an attempt to put pressure on the independent states which used to be part of the former Union and to interfere in their internal affairs."

The decision was adopted to revoke the powers of the USSR people's deputies who represent Azerbaijan.

Result of NKAO Referendum Called 'Positive'

NC1112151891 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] A referendum was held in Nagorno-Karabakh on 10 December. The voters replied to the following question: "Do you agree that the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic should become an independent state?" The result of the referendum was positive, but the Azerbaijanis living in Nagorno-Karabakh did not take part in it, despite the fact that voting slips were distributed to them as well. Peoples deputies from Moscow and other cities and reporters from various republics and foreign countries were present as observers.

More on Independence Vote, Clashes

NC1112190491 Yerevan Radio Yerevan Network in Armenian 1730 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] The overwhelming majority of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] has expressed support for full independence for the previously (?proclaimed) NKR which now has the right to freely decide on how it cooperates with other sovereign states and associations.

This is confirmed by the preliminary results of the referendum held on 10 December. The central electoral commission has announced that the entire Armenian population took part in the voting. Armenians constitute more than 85 percent of the population of NKR. Of those who participated in the referendum, over 99 percent voted in favor of NKR's independence.

Scores of observers from the former Soviet republics and European countries followed the progress of the referendum. In their opinion the referendum passed [words indistinct]. The Russian, Ukrainian and (?Kurdish) population in NKR also actively participated in the referendum.

On 11 December, the first day of NKR's independence was marked by the shelling of Stepanakert from nearby Azerbaijani villages. Exchanges of gunfire took place between the Armenian and Azerbaijani district of Kirkidzhan on 10 December. A [words indistinct] was seriously injured. The Azerbaijanis have fired upon a car near (Harav) village. Two Armenian passengers died, one [word indistinct]. Three Armenian resistance fighters died during the fighting in Todan and Sarysu villages on 10 December. Another person was seriously injured. As of today, the Azerbaijani special purpose militia detachment has abandoned Todan and Sarysu.

Defense Minister Relieved of Duties

NC1212105291 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1800 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] President Ayaz Mutalibov has decreed that the defense minister of Azerbaijan be relieved of his duties. President Mutalibov also decreed that T. Ibragim ogly Mekhtiyev, military commissar of the Azerbaijan Republic, be appointed as the defense minister.

The decree will be submitted to the Azerbaijan Republic Supreme Soviet.

Economic Agreement With Latvia Detailed

LD1012104491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1830 GMT 09 Dec 91

[By AZERINFORM correspondent Elmira Askerova]

[Text] Baku, 9 Dec (TASS)—The governments of Azerbaijan and Latvia have concluded an agreement on the principles of trade and economic cooperation for 1992. For the first time the exchange of goods envisaged by the agreement will be conducted on the equivalent basis.

Latvia will supply to Azerbaijan large quantities of consumer goods, products of the light, timber, woodprocessing, and pulp and paper industries. The volumes have been reduced for the deliveries of the products of the automobile and ball-bearing industries, tractor and agricultural machinery.

Azerbaijan will supply to Latvia products of the oil-refining industry, the ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical, petro-chemical and electrical engineering industries, specialized vehicles, silk fabrics and thread, canned fruit and vegetables, brandy and wine.

According to the statement by Azerbaijan President Ayaz Mutalibov, who was present at the ceremony, signing this document testifies to the mutual recognition of the state sovereignty and independence of the both republics. He has stressed that in the sphere of Azerbaijan foreign economic activities, the Baltic countries enjoy a special priority, serving as a bridge for entering the Economic Community of European states.

Security Minister Says Russians Safe

LD0812035291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1810 GMT 6 Dec 91

[By AZERINFORM correspondent Asildar Guseynov]

[Text] Baku, 6 Dec (TASS)—"I have no hesitation in saying that Russian-speaking citizens in our republic are in no danger. The rumors that are being spread around, espeically among members of the servicemen's families, that they are being persecuted, or that it is intended to expel them from the republic by force, are entirely without foundation." This was stated today in a conversation with an AZERINFORM correspondent by Azerbaijan's minister of national security, Ilguseyn Guseynov. In his view, individual acts of hooliganism cannot be regarded as racial persecution.

Major General Ilguseyn Guseynov, the new head of the department recently transformed from the KGB into the Ministry of National Security, said that his organization is subordinated directly to the president and answerable to the republic's parliament; it is guided in its work only by the laws of Azerbaijan.

The minister noted that the Ministry of National Security may do its job more effectively if it cooperates with the Interrepublic Security Service and similar services in the other sovereign states.

'Armed Men' Take 12 Railway Workers 'Hostage'

NC1112140091 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1800 GMT 10 Dec 91

[Text] The press office of Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic's Supreme Assembly has disclosed that armed men have taken 12 Azerbaijani workers hostage in Armenia's Megrinskiy Rayon on 8 December. The hostages are maintenance personnel at Ordubad railway station. The workers were taken hostage as they repaired Azerbaijan railway tracks crossing through Megrinskiy Rayon.

The contacts made by Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic's leading officials with Armenian officials have revealed that the hostages are being held in Kafan town in Armenia. In a telephone conversation with Geydar Aliyev, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, [name indistinct], who acts on behalf of the Armenian internal affairs minister, has assured that the 12 workers are alive and that measures are being taken to have them released.

Self-Defense Forces Formed in Border Regions

PM1012115391 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 7 Dec 91 First Edition p 1

[From roundup of TASS and correspondents reports: "Self-Defense Forces Being Formed"]

[Text] The formation of self-defense forces in the border regions is continuing in Azerbaijan. In particular a rifle regiment is being put together in Kubatly. The recruitment to a reconnaissance battalion is at the stage of completion. Questions of the supply of weapons for the new subunits are being coordinated by the republic Defense Ministry and the Azerbaijan Defense Council.

Georgia

Republic Congratulates Commonwealth Leaders

LD1112163191 Moscow TASS in English 1527 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] Tbilisi December 11 TASS—Georgia congratulated Belarussian, Russian and Ukrainian parliaments on the creation of a new commonwealth. "I hope the Commonwealth of Independent States will promote democracy, territorial integrity and sovereignty of former Soviet republics", Deputy Speaker of Georgian Parliament Nemo Burchuladze said in a telegram addressed to parliaments of the three Slav states.

Joining Not Considered

LD1112223491 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2000 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Report by correspondent Tengiz Oblotia]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The tripartite treaty signed by the leaders of Russia, the Ukraine, and Belarus is currently at the center of attention among Georgians as it is throughout the entire, already former, Soviet Union. It should be noted, however, that there is no visible special euphoria for there has been continuous talk of the disintegration of the empire over the past year and a half and therefore the elimination of the Soviet Union, which has actually taken place, has been received relatively calmly but very cautiously. Moreover, talk of the possible modernization of the empire—with another name and with changed structures—is repeatedly heard. For this reason many people are not in a hurry to draw final and categorical conclusions. Despite this, Georgia has welcomed the agreement on the commonwealth.

The Georgian Supreme Soviet Presidium has sent an appeal to the parliaments of the three Slav states which welcomes their decision and expresses the view that the commonwealth will help strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between the former Union republics. The creation of the commonwealth was also welcomed by Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who declared his support for the decision by the three parliaments at a rally on 10 December. The opposition holds approximately the same opinion, but it may be stated unambiguously that the issue of Georgia joining the new association has not even been considered.

Kitovani Launches 'Attack' on Troops in Tbilisi

AU1112163591 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 1405 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Statement by Vano Chelidze, commander of the Georgian Internal Troops, in the Tbilisi studio—live]

[Text] Today at 0520 [0220 GMT], an attack was launched on one of the military units of the Republic of Georgia Internal Troops that are located in Tbilisi. Up to 100 people took part in the attack, armed with automatic weapons and other combat equipment. According to preliminary data, it has to be said that this is Kitovani's [former commander of the Georgian National Guard who, together with a group of loyal former guardsmen, has sided with the opposition] armed band that has raised its hand against Georgian youth. I say this because this unit contained fresh recruits, those young people who had expressed their desire to serve in the Georgian Internal Troops; that is to say to serve their motherland.

Fortunately for (?me) and for us, there have been no fatalities. One young person received a head wound. Regarding the equipment located in this military unit, they blew up one tank, and one APC was hijacked.

The point is that we, with the help of our fellow countrymen, are trying to create that military force, that unit, that will slow down the current process of destabilization, that will establish order on the streets and in the towns, and that will carry out its patriotic duty. As one can see, however, all this does not suit those so-called patriots and Georgians who are standing apart from the Georgian people and who are trying to undermine this process with all their might.

I would like to say at the same time that today, Georgia's Internal Army comprises a large force, but as I stated on television earlier, it is a peaceful force. No one should dare to attack this force because it is very large. We do not want confrontation; we do not want to enter into combat with anyone, especially Georgians. It is time for Kitovani and his people to come to their senses and (?if he has this force)—and he believes he does—it should be directed not against the Georgian people but against the danger that is threatening Georgia and the Georgian people.

The most important thing [words indistinct] full responsibility must be borne by those who are acting aggressively and trying to destabilize the life of the state. Of course, Kitovani and his people must bear full responsibility in this matter because, as we said earlier, [words indistinct], but already today, such a step has been taken that could have such results that are absolutely unimaginable for me and probably for all Georgians.

It is time for you to come to your senses. Put your weapons away and direct them in the future not against the Georgian people but against those using tyranny.

Gamsakhurdia Declines Signing Naval Agreement

LD1212045991 Moscow TASS in English 1654 GMT 11 Dec 91

[By UKRINFORM correspondent Mikhail Stetsuk]

[Text] Sevastopol December 11 TASS—Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia declined to sign an agreement on the status of the Soviet naval fleet in Georgian ports. Black Sea Fleet Commander Igor Fasatonov proposed the agreement to the Georgian president, but Gamsakhurdia said it has to be studied attentively.

The commander met Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Tbilisi and said Georgian authorities should take urgent measures to promote normal functioning of the fleet and guarantee safety to the military personnel and their families, UKRINFORM was told at the fleet's press centre in Sevastopol.

Attacks on Soviet military facilities in Georgia have increased lately after the Republic proclaimed all military equipment on its territory to be the property of Georgia.

The agreement offered by Commander Kasatonov calls for preserving the fleet as part of the unified defence system of former Soviet republics. The fleet's withdrawal from Georgian ports might decrease the navigational safety of Georgian vessels, the military holds.

Kasatonov promised Gamsakhurdia his fleet will help educate Georgian commanders for the future republican fleet.

Interrepublic Affairs

Further on Central Asian Leaders' Meeting

Commonwealth To Be Discussed

OW1212005291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1700 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] As our correspondent has been informed from sources in the Kazakh Supreme Soviet, President Nursultan Nazarbayev will fly this night to Ashkhabad to meet with the leaders of the Central Asian republics and Azerbaijan. They will discuss the situation following the signing of an agreement between the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus on setting up a Commonwealth of Independent States.

According to the sources, N. Nazarbayev told a closed-door session of the Kazakh parliament that the three Slavic leaders had invited Kazakhstan as a fourth founder-member of the Commonwealth. Dec [December] 11 Nazarbayev discussed that on the telephone with the leaders of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. He also talked with some Central Asian leaders.

The sources make it clear that the closed-door session did not discuss a Central Asian pact as an alternative to the Slavic Union of the Three.

Observers note that the Ashkhabad meeting may discuss two or three Asian republics joining the Commonwealth as associated members. It can't be ruled out that the meeting will consider another variant - a new community under a possible name "Euro-Asian Commonwealth of Nations".

The sources in the Kazakh parliament also think it possible that another meeting should be held in Alma-Ata between Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian republics.

An Interfax correspondent has been told this night, Wednesday [11 December], by the staff of the Kyrgyz President that no official information has come on a participation by Askar Akayev in the meeting coming in Ashkhabad Dec 12 between the Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan.

Nazarbayev, Asian Leaders Meet

LD1212142791 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Text] The leaders of the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan are meeting in Ashkhabad today. According to Nursultan Nazarbayev, there is no fundamental difference between the document signed in Minsk and what was envisaged by the economic accords in Alma-Ata. It is necessary, Nazarbayev stressed, to adhere to coordinated, civilized methods of transforming the country, to recognize the independence of the republics that have proclaimed their sovereignty, and to help them to become members of the United Nations. Nazarbayev underlined the paramount importance of the need to form a defense alliance between Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, in light of the existing nuclear arsenal on their territory.

Karimov, Nabiyev Comment

LD1212161391 Moscow TASS in English 1449 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Text] Ashkhabad December 12 TASS—The presidents of the three Soviet Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan arrived in Turkmenian capital Ashkhabad on Thursday [12 December] to discuss the creation of the commonwealth of independent states.

"I'm inclined to the commonwealth of independent states rather than a union of sovereign states," Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov said.

"Each republic has to build its fate with its own hands. All ways to a new agreement on cooperation are open," the president said.

His Tajikistan counterpart Rakhman Nabiyev shared this opinion. "We all welcome the commonwealth. Our peoples are connected by mutual traditions and customs. We hope to work out a collective opinion on current events".

At the airport, the guests were met by Turkmenian President Saparmurad Niyazov and other officials.

Kazakhstan

Nazarbayev Press Conference on Commonwealth

PM1112171191 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 11 Dec 91 Union Edition p 2

[Report by G. Alimov: "Kazakhstan Is Considering New Realities"]

[Text] The republic's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, elected at nationwide elections, was sworn in 10 December in the Kazakhstan parliament. The day before he visited Moscow for a meeting in the Kremlin with Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. In the course of the 90-minute conversation they discussed the documents signed in Minsk by the leaders of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. Immediately after the talk in the Kremlin, N. Nazarbayev held a press conference at Kazakhstan's permanent mission. He answered numerous questions from Soviet and foreign journalists.

[Question] The three republics have announced the dissolution of the 1922 treaty. Does that mean that as of yesterday the Union no longer exists or is it a case of something else?

[Nazarbayev] Yeltsin and Shushkevich (I have not yet managed to talk with Kravchuk) stated that there is no

Slavic union, there was a meeting and at the meeting these documents were born in the course of discussion. At the meeting with M. Gorbachev, Boris Nikolayevich confirmed that there is no question of any formulations regarding any Slavic union. The Minsk documents can be interpreted as an initiative by the three republics.

Now about whether or not the Soviet Union exists. What you are saying also makes me ask the question. The Minsk documents stress that the laws of third countries do not operate on the territory of those which have signed the documents and union organs are also abolished. But it is a case of those organs which were created by the Fifth Congress of USSR People's Deputies. They are constitutional and legal and that means that I believe these questions can be decided only by the Congress. In general such questions should be resolved in a coordinated manner, with consultation with other republics. They did not even know about them. I can only regret that that happened. I repeat once more that the abolition of union organs and the transfer of the coordinating organs is, of course, the prerogative of the Congress.

[Question] If you believe that this is an initiative but the leaders of the three states believe it is a fait accompli, where are Kazakhstan and President Gorbachev?

[Nazarbayev] Today, when I visited Gorbachev and Yeltsin came in a minute later, we agreed that the agreement which the three republics had signed would be distributed as an initiative to the parliaments of the republics and would be discussed together with the draft treaty on the Union of Sovereign States. That is a different approach, that is true. After the Supreme Soviets have discussed these documents and made a decision in favor of one or other document, then the question of convening a congress of people's deputies will probably arise.

The draft treaty on the Union of Sovereign States provides for a place for a union president and government. In the Minsk document, however, there is nothing of the kind. You know, my attitude toward President Gorbachev varies, I have often criticized him for the errors he has committed, for conservative and restraining elements in his policy and for lagging behind events. But I believe that at the present difficult moment Gorbachev has not yet exhausted his potential. That is my personal opinion. In this difficult transitional period I believe he is needed.

[Question] Nursultan Abishevich, as president do you advocate a confederative state or the commonwealth that is being proposed, without union organs?

[Nazarbayev] My position is reflected in the draft treaty on the Union of Sovereign States, in whose discussion I took part at sessions of the State Council. If you recall, I expounded my position 27 August at an extraordinary session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Everything I said remains the case. Moreover, it is proving correct.

[Question] What was the atmosphere of the meeting in the Kremlin with President Gorbachev?

[Nazarbayev] Gorbachev, like me, did not know that this document would be signed. In a preliminary talk with me, Yeltsin, Shushkevich, and Kravchuk said that they would discuss how to jointly approach the market economy and coordinate their positions and discuss what should happen to the draft on the Union of Sovereign States in the future. As for Mikhail Sergeyevich's reaction, I think he was pained. I saw nothing supernatural in this document apart, perhaps, from two or three points.

[Question] A group of USSR people's deputies launched a campaign to collect signatures for the convocation of the sixth Congress of People's Deputies. What is your attitude toward that?

[Nazarbayev] I treat this initiative with understanding. The Congress of People's Deputies and the entire people should have the opportunity to voice their opinion on all these questions.

[Question] You say that to this day you support the idea of a confederation. At the same time you stated that you are a pragmatist. If the commonwealth option is more progressive, will you change your view?

[Nazarbayev] Yes, I always act as a pragmatist and will take reality as my starting point.

[Question] You said that one must also find out the opinion of the people. You have in mind the possibility of holding some kind of referendum or plebiscite?

[Nazarbayev] In my opinion everyone is already tired of referendums and elections. Now is the time when all politicians and the people should engage in the economy, the reforms, and the real improvement of life. Whether there will be a referendum or something else—let the Congress decide if it assembles.

[Question] Do you allow that there may be one more initiative—from the Central Asian republics, for instance?

[Nazarbayev] I am a categorical opponent of concluding contracts for national or ethnic reasons. I believe that is medieval. I would warn my neighbors against that.

[Question] Boris Yeltsin agreed that the Minsk documents are only an initiative?

[Nazarbayev] Yeltsin himself will answer that question. But I right now I am relating accurately what we said with President Gorbachev.

[Question] But what will happen if the parliaments of the three republics which signed the documents vote for the commonwealth option and the others for the treaty on the Union of Sovereign States?

[Nazarbayev] It will be bad. I very much pin my hopes on the intelligence of people in all republics, on the people's wisdom.

Nazarbayev Considers 'Defense Alliance' Needed

PM1212115991 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 12 Dec 91 p 1

["Express Interview" with Kazakh President Nazarbayev by correspondent Ye. Dotsuk; place not given: "N. Nazarbayev: 'An Alliance, First and Foremost for Defense'"]

[Text] "I consider the paramount need to be to conclude a defense alliance between Russia, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus on whose territories the nuclear arsenal is situated. That alliance would reaffirm that strategic arms will be managed from the center. It is necessary finally to stop frightening the world by means of the nuclear threat which could stem from the former Union's territory. As for the Minsk accords, we are ready to regard them as an initiative because we do not reject any reasonable proposals. I myself have on a number of occasions put forward such proposals on the Union treaty and the economic community. Incidentally, the document signed in Minsk contains no differences of principle from what was envisaged by the economic accords in Alma-Ata. I want to stress once more that it is necessary to abide by civilized, coordinated methods of transforming the country, to recognize the independence of all republics which have declared their sovereignty, and to help them to join the United Nations, because the world community can have a positive influence on our complex situation and help to avert chaos."

Report of Commonwealth Acceptance 'Premature'

OW1212013491 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1700 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Moscow branch of the Kazakh President's press service has warned that reports on an unequivocal recognition by Nursultan Nazarbayev of the agreement on the Commonweath of Independent States, as well as talk of Kazakh imminent entry, are "too assertive and premature".

In the early hours of Thursday [12 December] the Kazakh President will fly to the Turkmen capital Ashkhabad to hold consultations with the Central Asian leaders on their attitude towards the Minsk agreements.

Nazarbayev, Yeltsin Discuss Commonwealth

OW1212051791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2044 GMT 12 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin has told a meeting of parliamentary parties' leaders that the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazerbayev has expressed in today's telephone talk readiness to join the Commonwealth of Independent States and invited him to Alma Alta on Saturday [14 December] to address the Kazakh parliament on the issue. Yeltsin accepted the invitation. Interfax has been informed of this by the leader of the parliamentary party Democratic Russia Stanislav Shustov. In the course of the meeting each parliamentary party acquainted the President with its stand on the current political and economic issues.

Nazarbayev Says Gorbachev 'Is Needed'

PM1212131191 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 10 Dec 91 p 1

[S. Sokolov report under the general heading: "I Woke Up and Hey Presto! No Soviet Power"]

[Text] Kazakh Permanent Mission—At a press conference in the permanent mission, Kazakh President N. Nazarbayev had to fall back on vague pontification in order to articulate his attitude to the "Slavic" commonwealth. It emerged that the signing of an agreement by Yeltsin, Kravchuk, and Shushkevich to set up the Commonwealth of Independent States had come as a complete surprise to Nazarbayev. Nazarbayev had spoken with each of the leaders literally the day before, and each had assured him that what took place at Minsk would be nothing more than tripartite consultations.

"I am a pragmatist and an advocate of moderate transformations, which do not exclude radical reforms in the economy. In questions of state structure, I believe it necessary to be guided by the basic decisions of the Fifth Congress of USSR People's Deputies: to enter the market in unison, to coordinate this work through the Interrepublic Economic Committee, and to conclude bilateral agreements between republics."

At the same time Nursultan Nazarbayev answered a question on President Gorbachev's political future.

"I want to say frankly that there is no place for him in the agreement between the Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus. I believe that in these difficult times Gorbachev has not exhausted all his potential. He is needed."

Supreme Soviet Confirms Chairman's Election

LD1212065491 Alma-Ata Kazakh Radio Network in Kazakh 1600 GMT 11 Dec 91

[Text] By its own decree, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan has confirmed the election of Comrade Serikbolsyn Abdilda-ulu Abdildin as chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan.